

A large-scale construction site featuring a massive building frame made of rusted steel beams. Several construction workers in safety gear (hard hats, high-visibility vests, and tool belts) are positioned at different levels of the structure. Some are on scaffolding, while others are directly on the steel beams. The background shows a clear sky and more structural elements of the building under construction.

THE AMERICAN Legion

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The 21st Century

VA HOSPITAL

Lessons from four states

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Don't let health care costs squeeze your retirement.

You've worked hard to retire comfortably, but a major medical event could eat up decades of savings in a few years or months.

"Custodial care can cost \$80,000 a year or more," says Joseph "J.J." Montanaro, a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ practitioner with USAA. "That's one way for health care expenses to submarine your retirement plans."

Nursing-home care can drain \$250,000 from retirement savings in just a few years, and with base costs averaging more than \$40,000 a year, assisted living can also be a financial drain, Montanaro says. For those inclined to stay at home, costs can still run north of \$25,000.

There are ways to help protect your assets, even if a health crisis occurs or long-term care (LTC) costs mount.

The first step

Plan ahead for health insurance premiums. Financial planners add cost-of-living increases of 2%–3% every year when they determine how much a client will need in retirement savings, Montanaro says. But the same doesn't hold true for health insurance premiums, which tend to rise at a higher rate each year.

"Individuals should not be passive about their health-care plan," says Gregory Rivas, Executive Director of Retirement Solutions at USAA Investment Management Company. "You have to find the soft spots in the plan."

If you have an employer-provided health insurance plan, "understand it well and don't pick one just because it's the lowest premium," Rivas says. Take note of out-of-pocket expenses, deductibles and, more important, lifetime maximum coverage amounts.

Before retirement

Consider LTC and health insurance policies to fill your coverage gaps.

"LTC insurance can protect the nest egg you've built or your ability to choose where and how you receive care..."

– J.J. Montanaro is a retired Lt. Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve and CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ with USAA Financial Planning Services.

"After retirement, it's extremely hard to get the coverage you need," Rivas says. That's especially true with LTC policies, which need to be locked in before a pre-existing or chronic condition could disqualify you.

In 2012, 82% of LTC policy buyers were under age 65, according to the financial research organization LIMRA. And, most likely because of longer life expectancy, women make up 57% of purchases, the LIMRA study shows.

According to the American Association of Long-Term Care Insurance, the average annual LTC premium for a policy that provided a daily benefit of \$200 for up to three years was \$2,235 in 2012. The association's study also showed that policyholder benefits were provided for home care (50%), nursing home (31%) and assisted living (19%).

An LTC insurance policy is best for people with assets of \$250,000 to \$3 million to protect, Montanaro says. For those with more, cost for care can be covered with savings. Someone with less than \$250,000 in retirement savings will likely deplete it quickly if LTC expenses arise. When that happens, Medicaid may provide a safety net.

For veterans

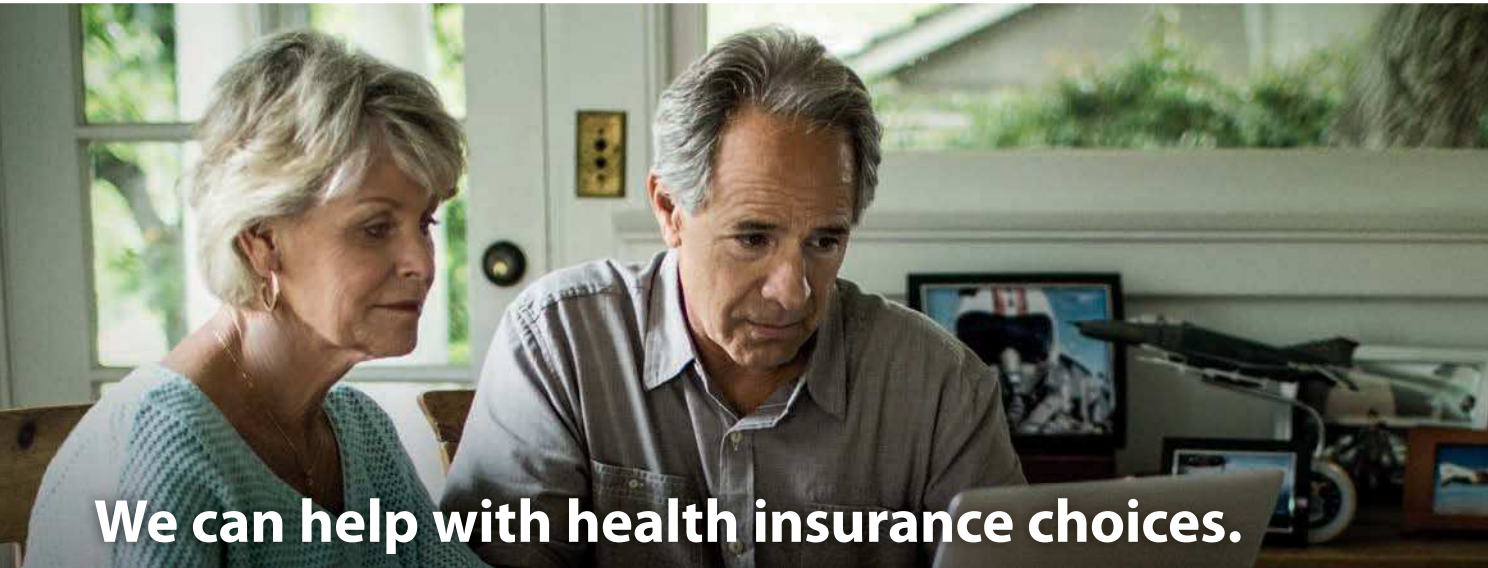
It pays to understand the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) benefits available, Rivas adds. Veterans with a service-related disability or financial need may be eligible for a full range of health-care services including treatment at VA hospitals and clinics along

with prescription benefits. This could help control out-of-pocket spending even for those with health insurance.

Many military retirees have TRICARE, the Defense Department-backed health insurance program. When a TRICARE member turns 65, Medicare becomes the primary insurance. TRICARE for Life kicks in as a secondary insurance, helping close many coverage gaps.

After turning 65

Medicare becomes the primary insurance for most Americans. While the program covers a lot, it generally doesn't cover long-term care, so costs can still add up.



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Naval aviator Jeremiah Denton spent years as a POW, eventually triumphing over his captors.

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National Commander Dan Dellinger made a living in construction, so trust him when he says the Legion's foundation is solid. *By Matt Grills*

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Beirut veterans haven't forgotten the 1983 bombing that killed 241 Americans and led to a U.S. exit. Nor have our enemies. *By Alan W. Dowd*

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NEVER FORGOTTEN

During July's American Legion Boys Nation week, South Carolina delegates Zachary Faircloth, left, and Austin Saggus honored the memory of U.S. Army Capt. John David Hortman by placing a miniature flag personalized with his name and the American Legion emblem at Hortman's grave in Arlington National Cemetery. Hortman, a Boys Nation alum and member of the Palmetto Boys State staff, died in a helicopter training accident in 2011.

Photo by Eldon Lindsay



The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.4 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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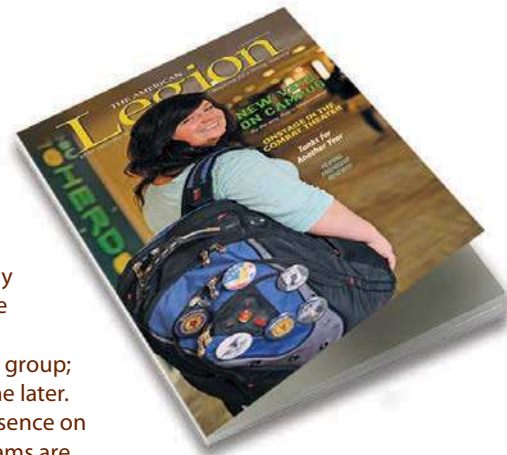
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'The Legion on Campus'

Regarding the article by Andy Romey (August), I recall continuing my college studies after being medevaced from Vietnam. Our "Vets' Group" was the only campus group that appealed to many of us who had little in common with the Greeks. We shared a camaraderie unique to those with military and combat experience, as well as a more global view of the studies.

We weren't affiliated with any national group; my respect for The American Legion came later. It's great to see that the Legion has a presence on college campuses, now that ROTC programs are falling from favor.

— Larry Fosgate, Las Vegas



'The Unstoppable Abrams'

I retired from the Land Systems Division as vice president of logistics and administration in March 1991. Production of new M1 tanks for the United States was terminating and upgrading existing M1s was starting, but the operating of the tank plants at the capacity they once enjoyed was not in their future.

Production of armored tanks is not like aircraft, wheeled equipment or vehicles, where many other manufacturers and supply chains exist. There is only one U.S. tank plant now. If it were to shut down and further reduce – or terminate – its supplier base, you have nowhere else to go until you can get that plant cranked up again – and that takes years, not months. You almost have to start from scratch, including training a skilled workforce.

I feel privileged to have been part of Abrams development and production, and to have been able to see and participate in its success in Operation Desert Storm. Thank you for a great article and a trip down memory lane.

— Mat Bolin, Traverse City, Mich.

The Abrams is without question the great fighting machine depicted. It is also the first U.S. tank powered by a gas turbine (jet) engine. I was employed for 28 years at AVCO Lycoming in Stratford, Conn., where our division designed and developed the ALF 502 engine. I write this note in hopes of giving recognition to the engineers and field personnel who followed the Abrams through all its battles, from Vietnam forward.

— Kenneth C. Hamilton, Niceville, Fla.

Spending billions to keep an unneeded tank plant open is corporate welfare. It's easy to glorify politicians fighting to keep this plant open as wise defenders of U.S. military dominance against a naive and detached administration, but isn't this a prime example of pork-barrel politics?

— Howard Grantham, Las Vegas

The Lima facility is very advanced, and people need jobs, but where is the enemy? Maybe we can take the tanks in storage and use them on the border instead of a fence.

— Gary Fultz, Spring, Texas

'All the War's a Stage'

I applaud the organized groups that entertained our troops in the field (August). I'd also like to acknowledge the individuals within the combat groups who did as much to boost morale.

Our "star" was Mike Hutton, a draftee from Springfield, Ill. Mike would sing and play guitar during our down time in some of the most remote places on or near Highway 13. His talents eased the tensions of combat for GIs and the ARVN alike, and I'm sure the Viet Cong and NVA were listening, too. We had few incoming attacks while Mike was singing. We have not been able to locate him since coming home, but I hope he is well and knows he was appreciated.

— John Maul, Machias, N.Y.

Marketplace Fairness Act

Thank you for the column on the Marketplace Fairness Act (Big Issues, August). If Rep. Steve Womack wants it to be fair, then brick-and-mortar stores need to charge shipping costs and mail items in three to 10 business days. And sometimes they need to mail us the wrong items and make returning or exchanging them a real pain.

To look at just part of the system and claim it's unfair is intellectually dishonest. Yes, when I purchase something I usually do not pay taxes. But I have to wait for it and hope it's the right item, plus I have to pay to have it shipped. The central issue is that taxes are too high. Lower them, and it will be easier to purchase things locally.

— Paul Bury, Cordova, Tenn.

Sen. Ted Cruz asks why we should impose a national sales tax "while the nation is trying to create jobs." In fact, not imposing a national tax would have the effect of the Internet becoming a virtual spider that stings its prey and then at its leisure sucks the liquified innards out of it. As Rep. Steve Womack correctly asserts, if Amazon and other major Internet players don't have to pay taxes, the effect on mom-and-pop, Main Street stores will be to have their viscera sucked out by them. I thought conservatives such as Cruz were in favor of small-business entrepreneurship. His opposition to this act is a strange way of showing it.

— Robert McEwen, Cypress, Calif.

Shinseki and the VA backlog

I commend VA Secretary Eric Shinseki for his actions to decrease the backlog (Veterans Update, August), but he is not helping those of us with disability claim appeals pending.

I am a 75-year-old Vietnam veteran receiving a 20 percent disability for a presumptive Agent Orange disability. In 2012, I was awarded the 20 percent retroactive to 2007. I appealed the rating with medical proof that it did not represent the severity of my disability. To my knowledge, appeals are not part of Shinseki's focus, and to this date, my case has not been reviewed. There are many other Vietnam-era veterans in similar situations. I have no idea why appeals are not included in the secretary's plan to expedite aging claims.

— Stephen Grossman, Elkton, Fla.

Another month, another silly bit of drivel about how VA is conquering the backlog of disability claims. We are looking for action in the form of settled claims, especially the simple ones that only require a cursory investigation. My fellow Vietnam War veterans and I have been waiting virtually forever for the resolution of Agent Orange claims, and these certainly come under the umbrella of "simple." If you served in Vietnam during the inclusive dates of the conflict, you were – in VA's own words – presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange. So if, like me, you have an exposure-related condition and have submitted a claim, that claim should be settled quickly once a rating exam has been performed. That's not the case.

Spare us any more political posturing about claims backlogs and such. Talk is cheap.

— A. Roy Olson, Tucson, Ariz.

'Good enough for thee ...'

Our "leaders" are talking about exempting themselves from the Affordable Care Act (Rapid Fire, August). They are professional politicians, there to make money and names for themselves. We are supposed to have citizen politicians who serve for a few years, then return home to their families and jobs. They should be required to get Medicare and Social Security, while they're at it. Of course, we all know they'll spin some "lawyeresque" to get their way. We citizens are no longer in control, but the controlled.

— Arvid Dennis Easterday, Galion, Ohio

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

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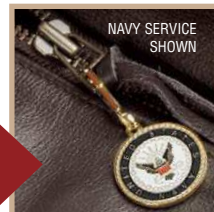
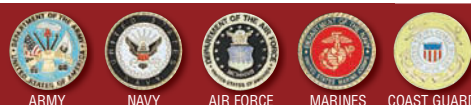


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NICK PALMISCIANO

BRANCH OF SERVICE: Army

YEARS: 1998-2003

MOS: Infantry officer

RANK AT DISCHARGE: Captain

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- Army Commendation Medal
- Army Achievement Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
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- Overseas Service Ribbon
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NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE LEGION: 5

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- Owner and CEO of Ranger Up, a disabled-veteran-run apparel company
- Runs the Rhino Den, one of the largest active military blogs
- Created and runs the Vetpreneur Project
- Actively engages local Legionnaires and the wider veterans community through social media

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Unborn Child Protection Act



SUPPORT

Rep. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn.

■ Blackburn is vice chairwoman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

The House of Representatives took a historic vote to protect the life of unborn babies at the point when science says they can feel pain – starting at the sixth month of pregnancy. Supporters of the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, H.R. 1797, are on the right side of science and public opinion. But those opposed are still struggling to explain why they don't believe unborn children deserve protection from dangerous late-term abortions.

Experts say unborn children can feel pain at 20 weeks and touch at eight weeks. Advances in technology show that they have distinct human characteristics. Eighty percent of Americans want abortion banned in the third trimester and 64 percent starting in the second trimester.

The conviction of abortionist Kermit Gosnell and similar stories of gruesome late-term abortion practices have also transformed Americans' attitudes. Even Gosnell's defense attorney, Jack McMahon, said after the trial, "24 weeks is a bad determiner ... It should be like 16 to 17 weeks ... I think the law should be changed to that."

Those opposed to ending late-term abortions can't explain the moral difference between what Gosnell did to a baby born alive at 23 weeks and aborting her moments before her birth. Blind allegiance to partisan abortion politics shouldn't trump science, public opinion and basic human compassion for those who feel excruciating pain.

The media will downplay and manipulate the political and practical implications of this vote. But they'll also miss the broader point: the real implication is not about some future election, it's about recognizing the unborn child's humanity and extending to him or her the first guarantee: the right to life.



OPPOSE

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y.

■ Nadler is the ranking member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice.

I was proud to defend rape victims and the reproductive rights of all women by speaking out against a Republican bill, H.R. 1797, that would ban abortion under certain circumstances.

For the first time, the measure fails to provide any constitutionally required exception to protect a woman's health, and only an extremely limited exception to save her life.

The bill did not even include an exception for victims of rape and incest. Reacting to public outrage, the sponsors attempted to include such an exception,

but their language inserts unprecedented restrictions forcing women to report the rape to the police before the exception can apply.

There are many reasons why rapes and incest often don't get reported: the toll our criminal justice system takes on rape victims, or the humiliation, harassment and trauma of a heartless cross-examination and press. Under this bill, women are victimized twice: once by the rapist, and again by a government that forces her to prove she has been raped.

The last-minute incest exception also only applies if the victim is a minor. The language gives no consideration to a young woman abused by her father at age 8 and impregnated by him at 18. It is as though her assault does not count.

Furthermore, the bill contains an abortion ban at a point prior to viability, which the Supreme Court has for four decades consistently held violates women's constitutional rights. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit recently struck down a nearly identical Arizona statute.

This demeaning and clearly unconstitutional legislation must be rejected by Congress and the American people.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Citing studies that claim unborn children can experience pain at 20 weeks, supporters of H.R. 1797 want to ban late-term abortions. Opponents say that women and their physicians should make these decisions.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

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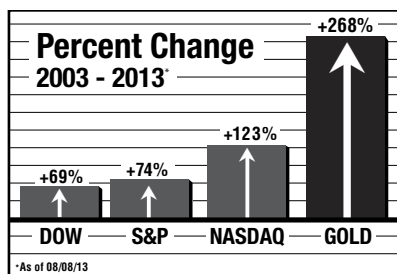


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The link between education, health

Earning a college degree may be a smart move in more ways than one. National survey data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that education level and health are closely linked. In homes where the parents didn't graduate from high school, 24 percent of boys and 22 percent of girls are obese, while in homes where the parents have a college degrees, the numbers are 11 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Thirty-one percent of adults without a college degree smoke, compared to 9 percent of adults with a degree. The life expectancy for 25-year-old men with a high school diploma is nine years less than for men with a bachelor's degree or higher.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, people with more education tend to have better incomes, less work-related stress and jobs that provide health insurance. They are more likely to live in healthier neighborhoods, with safe places for exercise, less cigarette and liquor advertising, and access to healthier foods.



Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

How to head off brain illness

BY MARTIN SAYERS

Keeping hold of their mental faculties is a big concern for people in the later stages of life. Most dread the thought of not being able to remember the names of loved ones or getting lost in familiar neighborhoods, which is why the specter of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia looms large in older people's lives.

But there are many other illnesses that specifically affect the brain. Strokes, vitamin and hormonal deficiencies, and reactions to medication can also cause memory and cognitive impairments.

Tumors are also a threat to brain health. The American Brain Tumor Association estimates that for every 100,000 people in the United States, approximately 209 have been diagnosed with a brain tumor; the highest increase has been noted in patients older than 60. The majority of brain tumors are not fatal if caught early and can be removed through surgery, but early diagnosis is vital.

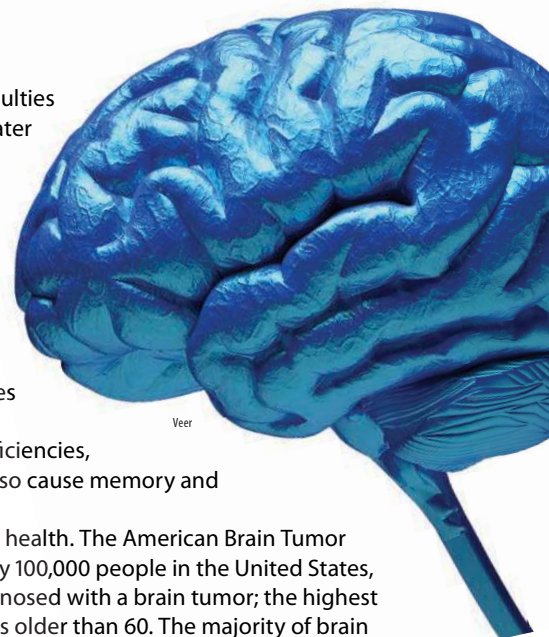
Mental conditions such as depression and anxiety also become more common with age and can be exacerbated by physical illness and loneliness. Depression may indicate the presence of a disease such as Alzheimer's, while depression and anxiety are common in those already suffering from it.

Despite the problems that can arise, there are plenty of ways to protect your brain and ensure good brain health throughout your life, says Dr. Jeffrey Cummings, director of Cleveland Clinic's Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health.

"Nutrition is very important, as is exercise – I recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of exercise three times a week," he says. "Brain fitness is also important, so it is vital to keep mentally and socially active in retirement years. Conditions such as diabetes and hypertension should be controlled, as these increase the risk of dementia."

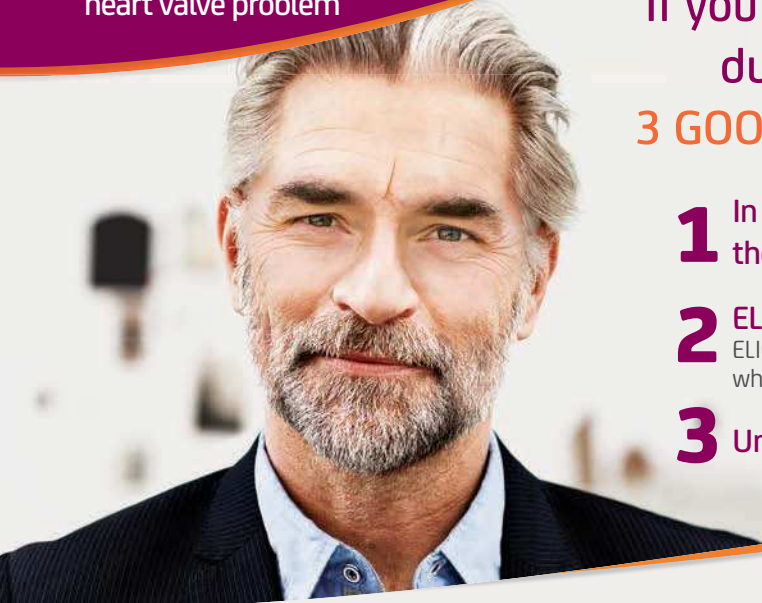
How do you know when you have a problem with your brain? Cummings says there are several early warning signs that can alert you to a possible problem in yourself or others.

"You should watch out for repeated questioning and problems with recalling recent information, such as repeatedly forgetting the time of an appointment, or wondering why a close friend or relative has not called for a while when in fact they just called that morning," he says. "Another important pointer is making errors on tasks that were formerly done well, such as following the checkbook, paying bills or completing a tax return."



See **BRAIN HEALTH** on page 15

For people with Atrial Fibrillation
(AFib) not caused by a
heart valve problem



If you live with a higher risk of stroke due to AFib, ELIQUIS gives you 3 GOOD REASONS to rethink warfarin.

- 1** In a clinical trial, ELIQUIS® (apixaban) reduced the risk of stroke better than warfarin.
- 2** ELIQUIS also had less major bleeding than warfarin. ELIQUIS and other blood thinners increase the risk of bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death.
- 3** Unlike warfarin, there's no routine blood testing.

**Ask your doctor if
ELIQUIS is right for you.**

ELIQUIS is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation, a type of irregular heartbeat, not caused by a heart valve problem.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

- **Do not stop taking ELIQUIS without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke.** ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.

- **ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death.** This is because ELIQUIS is a blood thinner medicine that reduces blood clotting.

- **You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, NSAIDs, warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, SSRIs or SNRIs, and other blood thinners. Tell your doctor about all medicines, vitamins and supplements you take.** While taking ELIQUIS, you may bruise more easily and it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop.

- **Get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding:**

- unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as unusual bleeding from the gums; nosebleeds that happen often, or menstrual or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
- red, pink, or brown urine; red or black stools (looks like tar)
- coughing up or vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
- unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain; headaches, feeling dizzy or weak

- **ELIQUIS is not for patients with artificial heart valves.**
- **Do not take ELIQUIS if you currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding or have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS.**
- **Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you have:** kidney or liver problems, any other medical condition, or ever had bleeding problems. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant or breastfeed.
- **Take ELIQUIS exactly as prescribed by your doctor and refill your prescription before you run out.**
- **Possible serious side effects include bleeding or a reaction to ELIQUIS itself.** A reaction to ELIQUIS can cause hives, rash, itching, and possibly trouble breathing. Get medical help right away if you have sudden chest pain or chest tightness, have sudden swelling of your face or tongue, have trouble breathing, wheezing, or feeling dizzy or faint.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see additional Important Product Information on the adjacent page.

Visit ELIQUIS.COM or call 1-855-ELIQUIS

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(apixaban) tablets 5mg

IMPORTANT FACTS

Eliquis®
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The information below does not take the place of talking with your healthcare professional. Only your healthcare professional knows the specifics of your condition and how ELIQUIS® may fit into your overall therapy. Talk to your healthcare professional if you have any questions about ELIQUIS (pronounced ELL eh kwiss).

What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

Do not stop taking ELIQUIS without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke. ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.

ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death. This is because ELIQUIS is a blood thinner medicine that reduces blood clotting.

You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (called NSAIDs), warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), and other medicines to help prevent or treat blood clots.

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one listed above.

While taking ELIQUIS:

- you may bruise more easily
- it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding when taking ELIQUIS:

- unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as:
 - unusual bleeding from the gums
 - nosebleeds that happen often
 - menstrual bleeding or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
- red, pink, or brown urine
- red or black stools (looks like tar)
- cough up blood or blood clots

- vomit blood or your vomit looks like coffee grounds
- unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain
- headaches, feeling dizzy or weak

ELIQUIS (apixaban) is not for patients with artificial heart valves.

What is ELIQUIS?

ELIQUIS is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation.

It is not known if ELIQUIS is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take ELIQUIS?

Do not take ELIQUIS if you:

- currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding
- have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. Ask your doctor if you are not sure

What should I tell my doctor before taking ELIQUIS?

Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you:

- have kidney or liver problems
- have any other medical condition
- have ever had bleeding problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ELIQUIS will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ELIQUIS passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take ELIQUIS or breastfeed. You should not do both

Tell all of your doctors and dentists that you are taking ELIQUIS. They should talk to the doctor who prescribed ELIQUIS for you, before you have **any** surgery, medical or dental procedure.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some of your other medicines may affect the way ELIQUIS works. Certain medicines may increase your risk of bleeding or stroke when taken with ELIQUIS.

How should I take ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

Take ELIQUIS exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Take ELIQUIS twice every day with or without food, and do not change your dose or stop taking it unless your doctor tells you to. If you miss a dose of ELIQUIS, take it as soon as you remember, and do not take more than one dose at the same time. **Do not run out of ELIQUIS. Refill your prescription before you run out. Stopping ELIQUIS may increase your risk of having a stroke.**

What are the possible side effects of ELIQUIS?

- See “What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS?”
- ELIQUIS can cause a skin rash or severe allergic reaction. Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
 - chest pain or tightness
 - swelling of your face or tongue
 - trouble breathing or wheezing
 - feeling dizzy or faint

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all of the possible side effects of ELIQUIS. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about ELIQUIS. For more information, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, call 1-855-ELIQUIS (1-855-354-7847), or go to www.ELIQUIS.com.

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Halloween candy by the numbers

90 Percent of parents who admit to taking candy from their kids' treat bags

Parents' favorites, by percent:

70
snack-size
chocolate bars

40
candy-coated
chocolate pieces

37
caramels

26
gum

Children's favorites, by percent:

68
anything
chocolate

9
lollipops

7
gummy
candies
and gum



Source: National Confectioners Association

Go nuts

A massive, 10-year study of 100,000 women between 35 and 77 found that those who ate at least two 1-ounce servings of walnuts per week were nearly 25 percent less likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who ate none, *WebMD Magazine* reports. Given their health benefits, this is no surprise – walnuts are high in fiber, good fatty acids and antioxidants.



BRAIN HEALTH *continued from page 12*

TRAIN THAT BRAIN The brain, just like the body, needs to be exercised to stay in good shape. That means challenging yourself with mental workouts. Try one of the following to introduce your brain to a training routine:

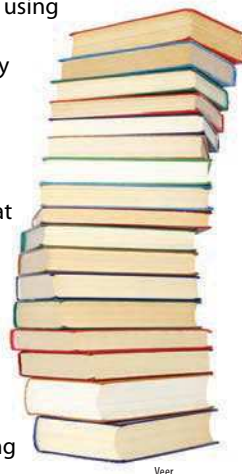
■ **Take a class.** Learning how to play a musical instrument or enrolling in a cooking course will give you a challenge and encourage memorization.

■ **Make new friends.** Staying socially involved means using your brain to engage people, and research shows that people with regular social ties demonstrate significantly less cognitive decline than those who are lonely or isolated. If you don't know many people in your neighborhood, try joining a local club or church group.

■ **Play some games.** Playing mentally challenging games such as chess, backgammon and bridge is a great way to both exercise your brain and interact with others.

■ **Read a book.** The next time you are at a loose end, pick up a book rather than turning on the TV. Reading forces you to concentrate, helps you exercise your cognitive skills and increases your vocabulary.

■ **Learn a language.** Trying to learn a foreign language will keep your mind flexible and sharp, helping to reduce the slowing of thought processes that comes with age.



BRAIN FOOD There's strong scientific evidence that diet plays an important role in brain health. Like any other organ, the brain needs the correct balance of nutrients to function correctly. David Perlmutter, author of "The Better Brain Book," describes the brain as "the most sensitive organ in the human body when it comes to nutrition. Not only does the brain respond minute by minute to the quality of food choices, but long-term, what we choose to eat and what we avoid can have a dramatic influence on our mental function."

Eating for brain health generally means following a normal healthy diet, so try cutting down on fatty red meats and sugary foods and include some of the following:

■ **Dark green vegetables** Greens such as spinach or kale are rich in B vitamins, which reduce a toxic amino acid called homocysteine that is known to be associated with Alzheimer's and vascular disease of the brain.

■ **Salmon** This fish is a rich source of docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), a fatty acid that is one of the most important nutrients for maintaining brain health. Studies show a marked correlation between the development of Alzheimer's and low consumption of DHA. Wild salmon, as opposed to farm-raised, is the best option.

■ **Turkey** As well as being low in fat, turkey is high in protein, which helps you stay alert and aids concentration. It also contains taurine, an acid that is thought to calm and stabilize the brain.



Martin Sayers is a freelance writer living in Cambridge, England. He specializes in health and nutrition issues.

VA offers incentives for ready claims

BY TOM PHILPOTT

What began as one senator's idea to help reduce VA's troubling claims backlog is from now until August 2015 a very real cash incentive for new claimants to use VA's Fully Developed Claims (FDC) program to get faster decisions in return for declaring claim information complete on filing.

The American Legion is among the veterans service organizations working with VA and the Joining Forces initiative of first lady Michelle Obama and Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, to expand use of FDCs. And a provision in the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 kicked the effort into higher gear.

Under the FDC program, launched in 2010, the Legion and other groups help veterans prepare evidence for claims so thoroughly that VA promises a decision within 120 days. The biggest challenges are compiling private-sector medical records or statements from individuals who can attest to a veteran's medical condition, and the location and condition of service assignments. For claims to be certified as fully developed, veterans agree not to send VA any additional documents after claims are filed. If they do, their claims drop into a routine claims queue.

In March 2011, Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., introduced a bill to encourage more veterans to file FDCs by offering retroactive compensation for up to one year from the filing date. This would ensure that veterans do not lose benefits while they collect evidence to create their more decision-ready claim.

In the summer of 2012, a version of Burr's FDC incentive bill was enacted into law as part of broader legislation to help veterans and Marine Corps families exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. This provision got little notice until VA announced that the retroactive FDC benefit became effective for first-time claimants on Aug. 6 this year and will be offered through Aug. 5, 2015.

"VA strongly encourages veterans to work with service organizations to ... participate in this initiative, since it means more money in eligible

veterans' pockets simply by providing VA the information it needs up front," says Allison Hickey, VA's undersecretary for benefits. "At the same time, it helps reduce the inventory of pending claims by speeding the process."

Verna Jones, director of the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division, says there are more than 2,700 American Legion service

officers prepared to help the thousands of additional veterans expected to file FDCs. "We're trying to set it up so the veteran can give VA everything it needs, thereby shortening the time for a decision and increasing the veteran's chance of getting the claim awarded," she says.

Jones' assistant director, Lori Perkio, says the average processing time for an FDC is 123 days – slightly higher than VA promised. But that's better than the average

processing time of 353 days for all other claims.

"While we expect and hope to see an increase in the number of claims coming in," Jones says, more FDC claims will help balance out the workload on Legion service officers. "As always, we will adapt to make sure we take care of our veterans. The Legion is absolutely ready for this."

Legion staff members have been visiting one VA regional office monthly since December to review how FDCs are handled. They've found processing inconsistencies and, in some cases, carelessness, which VA officials agreed to address.

The Legion has a long-standing contract with the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) to train service officers on new claim processes and programs, including the push for more FDCs.

Both Jones and attorney Ronald Abrams, joint executive director of NVLSP, say the Legion's aim is to do right for veterans filing FDCs.

"Fixing the backlog is not the primary goal," Abrams said. "The primary goal is to get veterans the benefits they are entitled to, and in the fastest possible time."

Tom Philpott has covered veterans and military personnel issues for more than 30 years.



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The new Las Vegas VA Medical Center sits just outside of the city – with plenty of room to grow. Photo by Todd Trigsted

THE 21ST CENTURY VA HOSPITAL

Four new medical centers, all past due and over budget, provide lessons for future construction. Once finished, they are expected to be the best hospitals in America, at least for now.

BY JEFF STOFFER AND KEN OLSEN

The Department of Veterans Affairs had not built a new medical center since the mid-1990s, when the West Palm Beach, Fla., facility was completed. Over the last decade, four have been simultaneously under construction. Three are the offspring of the 2004 Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) report that addressed shifting veteran populations, billions spent on unnecessary physical space, and an inventory of facilities that averaged over 50 years each in age and had fallen out of step with modern medicine. The fourth project was born of a different emergency: Hurricane Katrina.

The projects – Las Vegas, Orlando, New Orleans and Denver – are designed, intended and built to be state-of-the-art, technologically advanced, veteran-centric, highly efficient, environmentally friendly and, most prominent, to offer the highest quality of care possible for veterans. VA Associate Director for Facility Programs and Plans Dennis Milsten, when asked if these are going to be the best hospitals in America, he replies: “Yes, but I would have to preface that, ‘For a while.’”

| PROJECT LOCATION | INITIAL ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE | UPDATED ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Las Vegas | April 2009 | June 2014 |
| Orlando | April 2010 | 2014 |
| Denver | February 2014 | April 2015 |
| New Orleans | December 2014 | February 2016 |

Source: GAO analysis of VA data compiled in November 2012 and latest reported estimate for Orlando

The projects have taken longer, cost more and encountered more obstacles than anyone expected.

Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, called for a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report last year to find out why the projects were so delayed and beyond their original cost estimates. Based on research collected in November 2012, the GAO reported that the four medical centers were each, on average, \$366 million over initial cost estimates and, on average, 35 months delayed. To date, only Las Vegas is considered built, although all of its eventual services are not yet available.

"We recognize that some cost increases and schedule delays result from factors beyond VA's control," GAO Director of Physical Infrastructure Lorelei St. James reported to Congress last May. "Our review of VA's largest projects also indicated weaknesses in VA's construction-management processes also contributed to cost increases and schedule delays."

Among reasons the medical centers have slowly struggled to life, according to GAO, are:

- Changing health-care needs and patient demand in their service areas.
- Decisions to build stand-alone hospitals rather than shared facilities with university med schools.
- Debate over where to physically locate the hospitals in their local communities.
- Natural problems such as uneven soil settling in New Orleans and a high water table in Denver that forced continuous pumping of water from the site.

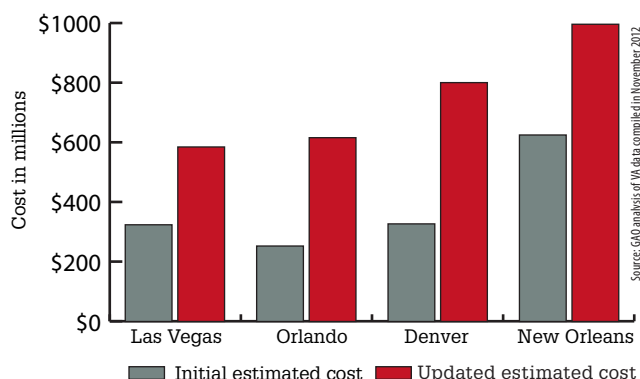
Conflicts between VA and contractors in Denver and Orlando have included at least two cure notices in Florida and a lawsuit in Colorado, generally over changes in plans that VA describes as normal but contractors would describe as flaws.

Fast-changing medical technology and patient-treatment programs, along with the arrival of new patients with unique needs from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, have had an effect on the pace of the projects. The GAO and VA both agree that better use of medical equipment planners – early, often and throughout the process – can help VA stay in front of medical and technological changes. Communication and relationship building have proven more effective in New Orleans and Las Vegas than Orlando and Denver. VA has argued that initial cost estimates for hospitals not yet designed, that may take years to finish, are inherently skewed. In the case of Orlando, the site of construction changed three times between initial estimates and the first blueprints.

While veterans have shown patience, anticipating world-class medical centers, Miller is not happy about the cost overruns and delays, especially with one of the hospitals in his state. "My single interest is the expeditious completion of this facility for the veterans of central Florida, who have been waiting over a decade for this medical center," Miller said at an August 2012 hearing in an auditorium next door to the VA facility that stood at least a year and a half away from completion, already more than two years past due.

Milsten says the past decade has provided lessons. "If there is one lesson learned that we took out of these four projects, and a significant number of others, is we don't announce to the world what it's going to cost and when we're going to be done until we have done all the preliminary engineering, the basic concept of design, and have estimates based on significant interaction between the designer and the user, and between the designer and the engineers, so we can advance the project."

In the following pages and at www.legion.org/vahospitals, see where VA stands in the advancement of new hospitals for the 21st century.





Nevada Legionnaires Mitch Roach, left, and Ron Michalski say the new Las Vegas VA Medical Center is worth the wait. Photo by Jeff Stoffer

LAS VEGAS: ‘Not your grandpa’s VA’

The new Las Vegas VA Medical Center hovers like a mirage on the southern Nevada landscape. Its tones are earthen, matching the original 150 acres of raw desert transferred from the Bureau of Land Management to VA and blessed by Paiute Indians in early 2006, 10 months before ground was broken on the site. Seven miles northeast of one of America’s fastest-growing cities, Las Vegas is the first full-fledged hospital built by VA in nearly two decades. While not all services were up and running by April 2012, that’s when it was no longer defined as a construction project.

“All the innovations are here,” says David Martinez, head of public affairs for the Southern Nevada VA Healthcare System, as he ambles past patients, clinics, labs, waiting areas and offices along indoor walkways bathed in natural light. Water sculptures gurggle in the corners of seating areas. The TVs are all tuned to nature shows. Robots deliver food. Remote-control hoists have been installed to gently elevate patients from their beds when sheets need changed. “This is not your grandpa’s VA,” Martinez says.

As the emergency department, women’s clinic and bed tower were within months of opening last spring, retiring Director John Bright reflected on the project that has taken a decade and nearly \$600 million to stand up. “I think we are very well suited for the 21st century,” Bright said, noting that three return visits to Congress were necessary to acquire funding to stay ahead of medical and technological changes during construction.

“One of the challenges is that when this hospital was designed, it was based on equipment available at that time,” Bright said. “Like power in the lab – I can’t tell you how much additional power we’ve had to put into the laboratories just to accommodate new equipment. It’s those kinds of things.”

The final product is a nearly finished 210-bed medical center that matches much of the spirit of the 2004 CARES plan that gave birth to it. The commission identified Las Vegas as one of three cities in greatest need of new 24-hour acute-care VA hospitals. Veterans of southern Nevada were at that time being shuttled to 17 different leased clinics around the city, and when they needed acute and specialized services, they had to travel to neighboring states.

“Oncology, eye care, audiology ... we would take one person to four or five different clinics in one day,” said American Legion Alternate National Executive Committeeman Ron Michalski, a volunteer driver who transported veterans to and from appointments before the new hospital was built. “Here, you drop them off, and it’s all done at this hospital.”

Veterans grumbled early that the new medical center was not going to be built downtown, a complaint that has since faded. “Really, it’s only five or six minutes from downtown Las Vegas, down I-15,” Michalski said.

Mitch Roach, an American Legion department vice commander from Laughlin, Nev., says the medical center is now a magnet for veterans. “It’s just such an outstanding, well-built facility ... to the benefit of every veteran in the tri-state area. Californians come here. Arizonans come up here. Everyone is now utilizing this hospital.”

Bright says the most important result is that veterans seem to approve. “We treat 49,000 veterans. Not every one of those are happy every day, but I think generally the veterans are very pleased with this project. I talk to veterans every day, and I am not hearing a lot of complaints. Finally, we’re where we need to be.”

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Kelton Sweet, left, and Art Schwabe of the Legion's Department of Florida hope the wait is almost over for a new VA hospital in Orlando. Photo by Jeff Stoffer

ORLANDO: 'A long time coming'

Kelton Sweet has been waiting for a new VA hospital since he retired from the Air Force. "I was 53 then," he said. "Now I'm 78, going on 79." Orlando had been eyed for a new VA medical center since 1981. Sweet was encouraged about that. He would no longer have to drive to Tampa for appointments. He has been waiting ever since. Over three decades later, his wait is about to end.

Orlando's new state-of-the-art 65-acre VA medical center complex – 11 buildings, including four 30-bed Community Living Center long-term care "villages," a 60-bed domiciliary and 134 inpatient rooms, surrounded by 3,100 parking places – is expected to open in 2014.

Like New Orleans and Denver, the central Florida VA medical center project was first hung up by questions of where to build. Sweet says that debate paralyzed the project for nearly two decades as politicians battled over their preferred locations. "So, nothing happened," he said.

Then came the CARES recommendation in 2004: "With only 45 percent of area veterans within access standards for hospital care, the Orlando area needs a new medical center."

Location remained problematic. According to last April's GAO report, "VA's site location changed three times." Finally, the facility was placed near Lake Nona to be co-located in a "medical city" to include the Central Florida College of Medicine, the Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, the University of Florida Academic and Research Center and Nemours Children's Hospital.

The new UCF facility opened in 2009, as did the research institute. Meanwhile, the 1.2-million-square-foot VA hospital – initially set to open in April 2010 – remained far from finished in August 2012 when House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., called most of

the state's congressional delegation to the site for a hearing to find out why it was taking so long and costing so much. Its estimated cost had soared by 143 percent to \$616 million and was en route to 40 months past due.

At the hearing were stacks of change orders – design revisions – that the contractor, Brasfield & Gorrie, said were adding time and money to the project. Company President Jim Gorrie told lawmakers at the hearing that "changes are still coming." At that time, the contractor lacked a complete list of equipment VA planned to install.

Initial design flaws were blamed, but changes in technology and patient care also contributed to the change orders. "While Orlando is higher than the norm, it is not that much higher than the norm, for what we experience for medical facilities," said Dennis Milsten, VA's associate executive director of facility programs and plans. "We don't build these things like, 'Well, we designed it in 2005, and whatever we did in 2005 is what you're going to get when it's done.' As new standards come out, as better treatments are available, as better technology is available, we do everything we can to accommodate that."

A leaky roof had to be replaced, slowing progress. Illegal immigrants were caught hiding in the ceiling of the hospital, suspending work at least one day.

Over the last year, however, the project has turned a corner, with 2014 completion in sight. "It has been a long time coming, but it is a massive undertaking," said Art Schwabe, American Legion Department of Florida commander. "You move from one piece of property to another one, naturally there's going to be delays. And you're working with the government. There are going to be delays due to that, in itself."

Read more about the Orlando VA Medical Center online: www.legion.org/vahospitals

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Past National Commander Bill Detweiler, left, monitors progress on the medical center that will replace the one nearly destroyed in 2005.

Photo by Matthew Hinton

NEW ORLEANS: 'The platinum lining'

Hurricane Katrina and the floods that followed in 2005 ruined thousands of lives and caused billions of dollars worth of damage. It also provided an opportunity for New Orleans to start over. Central to that opportunity was an early commitment of emergency federal funds to build a new VA medical center.

Catastrophe proved to be the mother of reinvention. The 200-room \$995 million VA hospital now rising from a 72-acre footprint between Tulane and Canal streets is the centerpiece of a biomedical corridor in the making, with a new Louisiana State University Medical Center separately under construction across the street, along with research facilities and clinics popping up around the site.

"The window of opportunity doesn't come open very often," said American Legion Past National Commander Bill Detweiler, one of many New Orleans veterans who has been actively involved in the project since the storm destroyed all but the top two floors of the former VA medical center. "You have this one chance."

Prior to Katrina, the CARES commission recommended new community-based outreach clinics (CBOCs) across southeastern Louisiana in order to put VA services within a half-hour's drive of any veteran in the area. And while the storm and its effects led to an exodus of many area residents, VA patient demand increased after the storm.

"Many believe that because there is a catastrophic event, people just leave," said Liz Failla, project coordinator and engineer. "Well, people return. It's your home. People who were not eligible (for VA enrollment) before became eligible because of job losses, income and catastrophic losses.

"What Katrina did was accelerate the (CARES) plan," Failla said. "We received approval to pro-

ceed (with the additional clinics) right after the storm. One thing CARES did not recommend was a new hospital. That was the platinum lining that came out of that awful, awful gray cloud that came over us."

A decade or more will have passed between Hurricane Katrina and the opening of a new, fully operational New Orleans VA medical center. The project is coming together in phases, with its first building – an employee-recruitment center "for the 1,100 (new) people we will need when we open our doors in 2016," Failla said – set for completion late this year. Altogether, the medical center will employ about 2,400 to serve some 70,000 enrollees.

"It's going to be wonderful for veterans, for people like me," said John Claiborne Baye, Vietnam War veteran, Legionnaire and amputee. "I'm still a patient. I still use the rehab clinic. Rehab is going to have its own area that is easily accessed from the parking lot. We won't have to walk a mile to get there, or roll a mile in wheelchairs. Everything is designed around making it convenient for us to get the care that we need. It's veteran-centric."

Complications have been numerous, including a debate over the final location, a decision to scrap plans for a joint hospital with LSU, the removal of nearly 75 existing structures from the building site, and uneven settling of earth at the foundation. Progress has depended on communication among all parties, Failla said.

"We believe this was about building teams and relationships," Failla said. "What we learned more than anything with the storm is that it's not about bricks and mortar. It's the people. We took that philosophy when we came into design. It was not the storm that forced those relationships. The lines of communication (here) are very, very strong."

Read more about the New Orleans VA Medical Center online: www.legion.org/vahospitals

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Colorado Legionnaires watch through a chain-link fence as their new VA medical center slowly comes into existence. Photo by Todd Trigsted

DENVER: 'Just get it done'

Denver's new VA medical center will cost over \$1 billion because of VA's design flaws, the general contractor on the project argued in a legal challenge filed last summer. Kiewit-Turner wants the right to walk away from the incomplete hospital if VA doesn't produce a design that matches the contractor's \$600 million bid, according to a complaint filed with the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals in July. The construction partnership says it cannot absorb the \$400 million in cost overruns it blames on VA as the long-awaited medical center falls further behind schedule.

"This is stunning," says U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., an Army and Marine Corps veteran who represents the Aurora-area district where the hospital is being built. "I'm embarrassed."

VA has reshuffled its Denver construction management team, and there are rumors the hospital won't be completed until 2016, over a year later than predicted. VA won't comment on the impasse, citing the pending litigation. Kiewit-Turner also isn't commenting, beyond a prepared statement that promises the company will continue working while the dispute is litigated.

Veterans, meanwhile, worry that the overruns and legal dispute will indefinitely delay completion of a project that has endured non-stop setbacks since VA first agreed in the late 1990s to build a 182-bed hospital and spinal-cord injury center at the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center site.

"Veterans are the part of the picture that's getting lost," says Ralph Bozella, chairman of The American Legion's National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission and immediate past president of the United Veterans Committee of Colorado. "I was in the hospital in 2010, and I was put in a room with three other men. It was a trip back to the 1950s."

The current facility opened in 1951, adjacent to what was then the University of Colorado Medical Center in Denver. It has been overcrowded and out-of-date for years. In 2004, the CARES Commission listed Denver among the top three locations in need of new VA medical centers.

The new hospital and spinal cord injury unit aims to serve several states, including Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana and Kansas. Private rooms will reduce infection risk and allow families and caregivers to stay with patients. The new medical center will also have more exam rooms, enabling VA to see more patients and reduce waiting time.

VA had two groundbreakings at the site – the most recent in November 2011 after veterans threatened to stage a protest over the stalled project. Construction finally began in January 2012, and the new facility is roughly 25 percent complete. "Nearly every hospital in the Denver metro area has completed major construction projects since we started talking about this, and for some reason we're still messing around," said American Legion Past National Commander Tom Bock, who drives by the construction site every day. "My biggest concern is Congress will say 'to hell with it' and pull the funding."

Initially estimated at \$328 million, the project is now expected to come in north of \$800 million, a cost that was driven up in part by discovery of a high water table that sent VA back to the drawing board. "Everybody knew the water table was high out there," Bock says. "It's just an excuse."

The question for Colorado veterans remains very simple: when? "The hospital has already been delayed 10 years, in our opinion," Bozella says. "Veterans have not asked for a Taj Mahal. All we've asked for is a functional hospital. Just get it done for the veterans."

Read more about the Denver VA Medical Center online: www.legion.org/vahospitals

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FIRSTHAND PERSPECTIVE

Francisco Pinedo wanted a career in the military or law enforcement. Iraqi insurgents had other ideas. Today, as prosthetics chief at the Las Vegas VA Medical Center, he offers amputees personal insight.



Photo by Todd Trigsted

Francisco Pinedo was sick of politicians and entertainers. He'd had enough of them dropping by his room in Ward 57 of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. "They weren't going to do anything for me," he said. "I didn't want to see them."

With each passing day after an improvised explosive device in Iraq shredded his right arm below the elbow, the young staff sergeant felt his future shrinking. His dream of a career in the U.S. Army was gone. Before he deployed to Iraq, he had passed the tests necessary to get into the San Diego Police Department academy, as a backup plan. That was no longer going to happen.

Pinedo, a father and husband, had become a disabled veteran who would spend the rest of his life without his original right hand. He was brooding over his situation when his mother and wife announced that another visitor had come to see him. "I was adamant that I didn't want to see anyone else," Pinedo said. "They said, 'You really need to see this man.'"

"I told them I didn't want to meet anyone. I didn't care who they were or where they were from. They said, 'No, you're going to meet this man.' I am fortunate that my wife and my mom were so adamant."

The man was Fred Downs, a Vietnam War veteran whose left arm had to be amputated after he triggered a "bouncing Betty" mine during a 1967 combat mission. Downs was 23 when he lost his arm near Pleiku. Pinedo was 25 when he lost his hand in Mosul.

At the time, Downs was national director of VA's Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service. He talked to

Pinedo that day, one combat amputee to another. Pinedo listened as Downs suggested that the young veteran look into a special VA training program and learn the field of prosthetics. "He totally changed the trajectory of my life," recalls Pinedo, now chief of prosthetics at the new Las Vegas VA Medical Center. A member of American Legion Post 76 in Las Vegas, he recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine*.

Describe your introduction to the Army.

I joined the Army in 1997. I was living in San Diego, my hometown. I really didn't have the means to go to college, so it was a good opportunity for me to get away from home, mature as a young adult and earn some money. I went through basic training at Fort Benning, Ga., and after basic training, I went to airborne school. I was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division. We literally hit the ground running there. Every day was a training day. Before I knew it, I had been there for three and a half years. I deployed to Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Fox. We were there for six months. I came back to the States and was selected to be a part of this new program, a corporal-recruiting program. You had to be a sergeant, E-5. We were the first people to pilot that program.

You decided at that point on an Army career?

After being in for three and a half or four years, I decided this is exactly what I wanted to be doing with my life.

Where were you when the war began?

During 9/11, I was stationed at Fort Lewis, Wash.

I was part of another new program the Army had: the Stryker Brigade. We were the first unit to have the Strykers (high-speed armored combat vehicles) and train with them. So when 9/11 happened, we were getting ready to deploy to Fort Irwin, Calif., which is a desert training facility for the Army. Once we finished that deployment, we went back to Fort Lewis, got our bags ready, and deployed to Iraq in October 2003. I was there almost a complete calendar year. I got injured in September 2004.

How did you get hit?

When I was in Iraq, we were not only the local police – at the time, government functions were disbanded – but we were also doing operations at night. During the day, we were handling a lot of domestic issues. We were in the northern part of Iraq, the city of Mosul, working with several different people chasing down high-value targets. During one of these missions, we were traveling through an area where there are a lot of rolling hills. It was on one side of the Tigris. On the other side was the Mosul airfield, where a lot of the friendly forces were stationed. In these rolling hills insurgents would set up and fire rockets into the airfield. Our mission was to go out there at night, set up an ambush and capture these guys in the process of trying to fire the rockets. As luck – or fate – would have it, they caught us as we were heading out.

We were in a four-Stryker formation. I was usually the second or third in the formation. This time, I was the lead vehicle. We had a relatively new lieutenant who was unfamiliar with the area, so he asked if I would take the lead. No problem. I got up in the front, and as we were traveling down one of the main roads in Mosul we were hit with an IED.

And you lost your lower right arm.

I did. I was riding on top of the Stryker. I was exposed, waist-high. I had my weapon up, at the ready. A big piece of shrapnel came through the back of my wrist, went through my vest and lodged in my chest. As soon as I woke up, I saw my arm basically shredded. My hand was hanging off of my forearm by just a couple of pieces of skin. There was blood flowing. My immediate thought was, I have to stop the bleeding. We all traveled with a first-aid kit. I immediately grabbed my tourniquet and put it on there. The blood wouldn't stop, so I had to put it on tighter. I knew I was going to lose my arm, but at that point I was more concerned with just staying alive.

At first, I was treated locally at the Mosul airfield.

It was nothing more than a tent with some IV poles and a few doctors. They had to amputate. During this process, I had lost so much blood that I wasn't able to fly right away. So it took a couple of days before I got on a plane to Kuwait, and eventually Landstuhl, Germany.

You knew then that your career in the Army was probably over.

Yes.

And your contingency plan was finished, too.

Prior to deploying to Iraq, I actually went down to the San Diego Police Department and took what they call the out-of-town testing. You can actually do your physical exam and your written exam – all that is required – in one long weekend. I was already planning for a just-in-case or backup career, depending on what happened in Iraq. My wife was also pregnant with our first child, so I was basically keeping my options open. Right before we left for Iraq, I got the letter from the police department saying, "Congratulations ... you passed everything. Once you get back from Iraq, if you're still interested, we will set you up with an academy date."

How did you deal with losing both of your career choices at once?

It was during my time at Walter Reed when I met Fred Downs. When I first met him, I was surprised to see an older gentleman with a prosthesis who looked to have the same disability I did. All of the information or counseling that I had received up to that point really didn't register. It had come from able-bodied people, people with both arms and legs who really didn't have a disability to overcome. I started listening. It started registering that there is life after an amputation. And it just so happened that this gentleman was the national director for VA prosthetics nationwide.

So you decided to follow a similar career path?

I wanted to have the impact that this gentleman had on my life. I wanted to pay that forward.

But you don't just jump off a Stryker and land in a prosthetics career.

I actually joined an internship program that VA has. It's a two-year on-the-job training to learn to do my current job, which is a prosthetics representative. So we're on the business side of the operation. We manage the day-to-day operations of the prosthetics department.

I started with VA in San Diego. I was an intern



Online extras

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 www.legion.org/vahospitals

there for two years. Based on my performance, they offered me the assistant chief job there, which I happily took. I was very happy in San Diego. The only problem or issue I saw was that veterans from Las Vegas were coming all the way to San Diego for care. Being a disabled veteran, I would ask them, "Why aren't you going to your local VA in Las Vegas?" They told me there wasn't one. That stuck with me for a long time. When the chief job in Las Vegas opened up, I thought, what a great opportunity for me to make a difference.

The new VA medical center was far from done when you started your new job, correct?

When I first arrived in Las Vegas in 2008, we were working out of a 1,200-square-foot office building. We didn't offer any of the services we do now. We mainly worked through our community partners or commercial vendors. Fast-forward to 2012, and we move into the new facility. We begin to put together the state-of-the-art facility that we have now, including the prosthetic and orthotic fabrication lab. We have the latest technology available for fabricating artificial limbs. We have very qualified individuals on staff. We have come a long way from the 1,200-square-foot office building.

Prosthetics have also come a long way.

One of the only benefits of war is that there are advances in the medical field. And prosthetics is

one of those fields that directly benefits from the research.

How does one make an artificial limb work?

The way (my) prosthetic works is, the signal sent from the brain to the remaining muscle in the arm – there are electrodes placed on the muscle – that message goes from the brain to the muscle to the electrodes, which then go to the motor in the hand.

Ninety-nine percent of the activities I do throughout the day, I actually don't feel like an amputee unless I don't have my prosthesis. When I have it on, the level of function that it gives me, in my mind, I don't feel like an amputee.

How does it help patients that you and others on staff are veteran amputees?

I think they develop a trust. We have been there. We use these products. We don't want them to just get by. We want them to excel in life. We've been able to do that. There are no limits except for the ones that you set in your own mind.

That's one of the benefits of this position, having that one-on-one contact with the veteran who is in the same situation I was a few years ago.

You're also happy to share your story with young people. Why?

I go to several schools around Veterans Day to talk about what it is to be a veteran and some of the sacrifices our veterans make for our country. I have found it's better to engage them directly. I have kids myself, and they ask me questions all the time about what it's like to be in the military, what it's like to serve your country.

What made you join The American Legion?

I joined The American Legion when I was at Walter Reed many years ago. I recently joined the local post here in Las Vegas. The veterans service organizations, the Legion in particular, are very active in issues. It's nice to have a voice that's just looking out for the best interests of the veteran.

Is that what Fred Downs did for you?

Once I was injured, I didn't know what I was going to do. I had offers from companies, but VA's mission to "care for him who shall have borne the battle," I really identified with it. It resonated with me. There is nothing I would rather be doing right now than helping my fellow veterans.

– Jeff Stoffer

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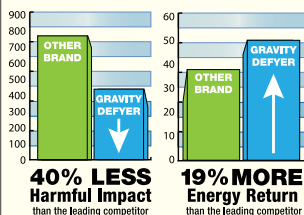
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SHOCK ABSORPTION STUDY HPW Biomechanics, 2012

*Shock absorption: Measurement of maximum pressure (KPI). Energy return: Measurement of energy returned (Joules).

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WHEN

HELL WAS IN SESSION

Naval aviator Jeremiah Denton spent nearly eight years as a POW, eventually triumphing over his captors.

On July 18, 1965, Navy Cmdr. Jeremiah Denton's A-6 Intruder was shot down during an attack on enemy installations near Thanh Hoa. Months after his capture, he brought the plight of Vietnam prisoners of war to public attention in a television interview in Hanoi, blinking his eyes in Morse code to spell out "T-O-R-T-U-R-E."

Knowing the consequences would be severe, Denton responded to the Japanese reporter's questions about U.S. bombing by declaring, "Whatever the position of my government is, I agree with it, I support it, and I will support it as long as I live." Miraculously, the tape made it to Japan with minor cuts and was bought and aired by a U.S. network.

For embarrassing his North Vietnamese jailers, rebuking their attempts at communist indoctrination, and shepherding his troops through covert communication and orders, Denton paid a price demanded by few Americans who wear the uniform.

The following is an excerpt from Denton's classic account of his time in prison, "When Hell Was in Session," now in its seventh printing.

The situation in 1968 was full of contradictions and ambiguities, and behind it all was the Johnson administration's difficulty in trying to come to terms not only with Hanoi but with South Vietnam on proposals that would satisfy the three parties. The peace negotiations in Paris had been between the U.S. and Hanoi, but in November the two sides agreed to allow South Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government – the Communist entity in South Vietnam – to join the talks, which they did in 1969. Perhaps this was the breakthrough towards peace that encouraged the North Vietnamese to believe an end was in sight.

In any case, they prepared for the coming release ceremonies in a savage way, and our 14-month sabbatical at Alcatraz suddenly came to an end.

Just before dawn one day in the middle of December, a guard hid in a bomb shelter across the cement gutter from my cell and slipped unnoticed into the empty cell between (Air Force Capt. George) McKnight's and mine. We had gone on the wall to each other as soon as we had awakened. At the first few taps the guard leaped from the cell and shouted to McKnight, "You communicate! You communicate!" He shook his finger at my door and repeated the charge to me in a high-pitched, excited voice.

Instantly, a deep chill ran through my body. They could have caught us communicating at any time, and this sudden noisy coup could mean only one thing. After 14 months of relative peace, we were to be tortured again. I knew this would be a deadly serious matter. The others sensed the same thing, and fear immediately gripped them. I began to pray.

As we watched under our doors and listened intently, trying to figure out the next move, guards came to McKnight's cell and led him away to a building across an alley outside the compound gates. Then all was silence again. I tapped to (Navy Lt. j.g. George) Coker, two cells away, and we speculated on what was happening to McKnight. We concluded the worst.

Several days later, in the early morning hours, McKnight came dragging along the cement walk to the latrine, where he emptied his bucket. I peeped under my door at him. He was bloody and looked terrible, but he had enough strength remaining to scrape to us that the North Vietnamese had tortured him into writing a letter of apology for his crimes.

He was put back in his cell that day and tapped to me just a few words: "Purge, I say no comm."

We understood the word "purge" only too well, and we appreciated his getting word to us that he had denied communicating. Of course they weren't interested in whether we were communicating or not. It was just a convenient excuse to put pressure on us for some as yet unknown reason.

Before McKnight could continue tapping, I was taken from my cell and across the alley to a quiz room where I faced Mickey Mouse, no longer the attentive listener. He got right to the point.

"You have been caught communicating," he said, shaking his finger. "You must write letter to President Ho Chi Minh and apologize for your crimes."

I said I would not.

"OK," Mickey Mouse said. "I leave you to think deeply."

I was taken to another room in the same building. Irons were placed on my legs and I was pushed against a wall, arms outstretched over my head. There I stood for two days and two nights

under guard. If my arms slipped, the guard would force them upward again and press a nail hard against the palm of my hand for added encouragement.

On the third morning, Mickey Mouse came in and asked me again if I would write the letter of apology. I refused.

"We are going to get serious then, Denton," he warned. Having beaten them in my last two torture sessions in 1966, I thought I could do it again. In an effort to deter the punishment, I wrote Mickey Mouse a note reminding him of my previous success, and said that if they were determined to torture me, they would have to torture me to death. That was a mistake. It was a pledge I couldn't keep.

The next stage was rear cuffs and leg irons. A guard dragged me around the rough cement floor until the leg cuffs began tearing into my ankles. He jerked me left and right, lifted me by the rear handcuffs – the same mess all over again for hours. Then I was left on the floor for a day.

Mickey Mouse gave me one more chance to write the letter, and again I refused.

In the months since my last torture, the Vietnamese had developed a rig that was unknown to me, and it was the perfect answer to my ability to take pain until passing out. As soon as Mickey Mouse left the room, a guard slammed open the door, and held out a rope and a four-and-a-half-foot pole, pointed at one end.

Two more guards came into the room, and the three of them began tying my wrists and lower forearms together in front of me. They forced my elbows apart and forced my knees between them, and pushed the pole through the hole created by my elbows and knees. Then they tipped me back on my spine and propped my feet on an overturned stool so that my feet were raised about a foot off the ground.

In essence, I was in the fetal position, my thighs pressed against my chest so tightly that I could hardly breathe. My body was tipped at such an angle that most of my weight was on the tip of my spine. The pole was the key to the rig. If the rig was properly tied, I would pass out eventually and fall on my side; the end of the pole would hit the floor and slide out of the rig, easing the pressure on my arms and restoring circulation. The pain that came with the blood circulation would bring me back to consciousness; thus the prisoner couldn't beat the rig by passing out.

But the guards had tied the ropes poorly. They had allowed some of the loops to overlap, and by

*After a period of time, pain becomes an all-encompassing entity,
a fiery, blinding devil that courses into every part of the brain
until you would literally do anything to escape it.*

working at the rope I could eliminate the overlaps, thus loosening the rope and allowing enough circulation so that I lasted about four hours without passing out. The rig was still painful, but I could stand it. Mickey Mouse came in, obviously worried that the rig wasn't working and I would beat it, as I had promised.

He had the guards untie me and I was brought some food, but I couldn't eat it. I dawdled with the food to buy time, but Mickey Mouse became impatient, and with a wave of the hand said, "Denton, we will break you now."

I was retied, but again ineffectively, and I was able to last four more hours. Finally, a guard named Sad Sack inspected the rig, criticized the guards for their incompetence, and supervised the retying. This time the rig worked, and after an hour of agony, during which time I watched my hands slowly swell and turn black, I passed out and fell over. The end of the pole hit the floor and slipped from the rig, as intended, and the rush of blood to my arms brought me back to consciousness and renewed pain. By then, six or seven guards were kicking and punching at me.

After a period of time, pain becomes an all-encompassing entity, a fiery, blinding devil that courses into every part of the brain until you would literally do anything to escape it. After three cycles, the rig became too much. It had driven me to the point where I would have happily committed suicide to escape it. I would have run my own mother down with a truck if the price was freedom from pain, but I could do nothing. I felt my heart pumping mightily to force the blood through my strangled limbs and hoped that it would give out.

I prayed to die.

After a total of about 12 hours in the rig, I called for the guard, who had been listening outside. In a matter of seconds there was the sound of excited voices as he passed the word that I had broken, and I heard several people rushing in triumph toward the cell. Among them was Mickey Mouse with pen and paper in hand. I agreed to write.

The next day, in about three brief paragraphs, I wrote, in essence: Dear Ho Chi Minh, I am sorry I bombed your country. Please forgive me.

On December 23, I was returned to my cell practically unconscious and in high fever. I was

too whipped to eat, and just slumped on my pallet.

On Christmas Eve, still very sore and with the fever still raging, I was blindfolded and walked with assistance to the Plantation, two blocks away, where I was taken to a brightly lit room that was obviously rigged for picture taking. There was a spectacular table full of goodies, including champagne, in the middle of the room.

And there, ensconced on a high-backed chair, was my old friend Cat, his eyes sparkling. He thought I had been beaten down and was now prepared to mop up what was left.

"Ah, Denton," he said, "good to see you again. How are you?" I told him I had been tortured again. He ignored that. "How are conditions?"

"Terrible! Can't eat because of the torture."

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Only if you do it for everyone."

The conversation, such as it was, was deteriorating rapidly. Cat was getting angrier and angrier, and I was getting meaner and meaner.

To break the tension, Cat politely offered me a banana, but I declined.

"All right, Denton, eat that banana!" Cat said, his voice rising as he pointed to the table.

"No."

"It will be good for you."

"If everyone gets a banana, I will take it."

He lost his composure.

"Shut mouth! You eat banana! That is an order!"

I just looked at him sullenly and shook my head. It was an impasse, and Cat was fast losing face. Abruptly, he ordered me back to my cell.

I knew I would pay for my attitude, but I was angry as hell about the apology I had written to Ho Chi Minh.

They broke off the torture temporarily after McKnight's and my ordeal because they wanted to go through the ritual of observing our holiday season. But on January 8, I was taken across the alley for the second time, where Mickey Mouse asked me what had happened on Christmas Eve. I shrugged and told him I had followed the Code of Conduct and refused a special favor.

"You were a fool on Christmas Eve, Denton, and now you must pay," Mickey Mouse said. "You must read on the camp radio." He knew I would refuse.

I was run through the same mill for two more excruciating days, only this time Mickey Mouse left

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I was run through the mill for two more excruciating days, only this time Mickey Mouse left the window open and faced me toward it so the prisoners at Alcatraz could hear my screams.

the window open and faced me toward it so the prisoners at Alcatraz could hear my screams. When I gave up, he had me read excerpts from their news service into a tape recorder for about a minute, but I was so incoherent that the tape was useless.

The next day, Softsoap, holding a pole and rope in his hands, warned me that the tape was unsatisfactory and said, "You must make it sound more like you." The following day I read the news over and over again until they settled for something they thought they could play on the camp radio, but it was still screwed up. They played the tape for about 20 seconds, but when my shaky voice and gross mispronunciations brought laughter and jeers from the Alcatraz cells, they turned it off.

As soon as I was returned to my cell, Mickey Mouse tried to cash in on my screams by ordering (Navy Capt. James) Mulligan to read on the radio and threatening him with torture if he didn't.

"I know what you did to Denton," Mulligan told them, "and you'll have to do the same thing to me."

The waves of B-52 bombers had done their jobs and could fly almost without fear of loss. President Nixon had sat silently in the White House while a hurricane of criticism raged in the country and throughout the world. In a few days, the planes had methodically smashed Hanoi's air defenses. Something that could have been done 10 years previously was now successful. The North Vietnamese leadership caved in. The bombing was halted on December 30. Negotiations were resumed in Paris on January 8, 1973.

On January 23, President Nixon announced the end of America's longest war, with the cease-fire to go into effect on the 27th.

Images of my family running across an airstrip, arms outstretched, swirled through my mind as we plodded through the last days of imprisonment.

Now the North Vietnamese wanted an end to it. They announced terms of the peace agreement over the camp radio and then delivered mimeographed copies of the agreement and protocols of the release to every prisoner, as provided for in the peace agreement. The seniors from Building Zero and Blue returned to the community.

On February 3, when we rejoined the others, the barricades had been torn down and half the camp was allowed in the courtyard at one time for games.

I wept in joyful reunion with Bill Tschudy, a face out of the distant past, and Ed Davis, a voice out of the distant past. I remembered as though it were only yesterday the soft, deep voice singing "Fly Me to the Moon," and the single word "Agony!" being tapped out on the wall. The word expressed perfectly the events of seven and a half years. I attached pale faces to whispering voices: Ray Merritt, Ralph Gaither, Bob Purcell, Phil Butler ...

And Red McDaniel came up to me, hand outstretched, and said that many of his friends had seen me on television, in the interview with the Japanese reporter, before he had been shot down.

"That was remarkable, Jerry," he said. I was much relieved. Through all the years of imprisonment, I had worried about the image the North Vietnamese had managed to project of us to the world. Now I understood that our efforts had not been in vain.

Camp discipline was gone, suddenly. The guards still carried their guns, but there were no restrictions on us. No more note drops, covert communications, policy decisions. When they offered us new clothing we thought at first to refuse it and go out the way we had lived for years, in tattered pajamas. But then we said, "Oh, hell," and everyone lined up for the leather shoes, the socks, khaki pants, shirt and windbreaker provided.

Now the sandal was on the other foot as Risner, Stockdale and I went in one at a time to be questioned by Mickey Mouse, two other officers and a civilian.

Mickey Mouse asked what I would say when I got home.

"I haven't answered your questions this long. Why should I answer you now?" I asked. "Why do you care what I say anyhow? There are hundreds of men who will speak when they get home."

"You have credibility, Denton."

"What do you expect? Don't you know I'll tell about the torture?"

"Yes. We expect that."

"Why do you want me to tell you what I will say?"

Mickey Mouse sucked in his breath, paused for a moment, and then said, "We afraid when you get home and make speech, Mr. Nixon will not give us aid he promised. Public would not allow." I was struck by the "mister." They had changed.

"I will say that through 1969 you treated me and the others worse than animals."

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I expected a denial, but instead he leaned forward and said, "Yes, but is that all?"

"No. That is not all. Late in 1969 you came off the torture. After that, to my knowledge, you did not resort to extreme punishment. You then acted within your conscience, such as it is."

"That's the truth," Mickey Mouse said, "but others may not tell truth."

"If there is any exaggeration, the senior officers will take care of that," I replied.

As the 13th pilot to be shot down, I would go out with the first group as senior officer. The sick and injured would be in the front ranks and then the others in the order of shootdown.

Our captors agreed to allow us to march out under our own leaders. We would go through the gate in Heartbreak Hotel that I had entered blindfolded and bound so many years ago.

Heads up, chests out, some men staggering a bit, we marched in cadence to the buses, then were driven, subdued in the solemnity of our thoughts, almost hypnotized, through streets lined with throngs of silent people to Gia Lam airport, three miles from Hanoi. Much of the rest is a blur.

Guards with sidearms ... Fox in a sidecar directing the operation through a walkie-talkie ... Rat ... Flea ... the first sighting of the airport and a long, hard cheer from the prisoners. A Red Cross tent.

But no American planes. There had been a delay, and I prayed there hadn't been a last-minute hitch. Rat, who had introduced me to my cell at Alcatraz, now gave us good food, beer and fudge. "We would like this to be a pleasant memory," he said.

He offered us souvenirs of Hanoi. We already had quite a few, I said, and declined for all of my group.

Shortly after noon a beautiful sight appeared in the clear sky: the high tail and swept wings of an American C-141. Another cheer, then a short drive to the release point; a long table; Rabbit at a microphone; and on the other side of the table the handsome men and women in the blue uniforms of the U.S. Air Force, with Frank Sieverts of the State Department and Roger Shields of the Department of Defense. We kept looking toward the waiting C141, its huge ramp opened wide in welcome.

Dazedly, we walked one by one up to Rabbit and gave him our names; he repeated them in a flat voice and we walked to the plane. In moments it was lifting us to the sky on its way to Clark Field in the Philippines.

We were leaving it all behind. Heartbreak, New



Upon landing in the Philippines, Denton saluted the U.S. flag and thanked the country for bringing him home.

Guy Village, the Mint, Little Vegas, the Gate, Zoo, Alcatraz. And Ron Storz, Atterberry, and others buried somewhere in North Vietnam.

Once we were in the air, I was told that the senior officer was invited to make a statement upon arrival. I scratched out a few words, then tried to memorize them as we flew along.

"We are honored ..."

I thought about the 50,000 American fighting men who had given their lives in a cause at last won.

"... to have had the opportunity ..."

I heard a thump as the wheels were lowered. The men began to stir. We had covered the distance between captivity and freedom quickly.

"... to serve our country ... under difficult circumstances."

The plane taxied to a stop. I was shaky, and stumbled on the steps. There was a large crowd waiting.

"We are profoundly grateful to our commander in chief and to our nation for this day."

I felt strangely unfulfilled. I hadn't said quite all that was in my heart. Final, unrehearsed words slipped from me: "God bless America!"

Land that I love. 🌿

Jeremiah Denton, 89, is a retired Navy rear admiral, a former Republican senator from Alabama and a life member of The American Legion.

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BUILT *to* LAST

*National Commander
Dan Dellinger
made a living in
construction, so trust
him when he says
the Legion's
foundation is solid.*

BY MATT GRILLS

Dan Dellinger is a history guy. Always has been.

A lifelong resident of Vienna, Va., he'll tell you how, in an early Civil War skirmish, Confederate forces ambushed Union soldiers moving by train toward the town, the first time a railroad was used tactically in combat. Just up the hill from American Legion Dyer-Gunnell Post 180, where he's a member, Dellinger can point out the barely visible outline of a star-shaped earthen fort likely built and used by the Union Army between 1863 and 1865.

He enjoys personal connections to the past, too. Dellinger's father somehow inherited the sword of Confederate Gen. Barnard Bee Jr., who at the First Battle of Bull Run gave Brig. Gen. Thomas Jackson his famous nickname ("There stands Jackson like a stone wall! Rally behind the Virginians!"). "We always heard about that," Dellinger says.

His appreciation for history is the thread running throughout his own story – service as an Army infantry officer, stints as Vienna's vice mayor and town councilman, and a construction career that's included renovation of centuries-old churches. Call him old-fashioned, but he's a man who wants to protect and preserve the community and country he loves.



Dellinger likes that the Legion has the same purpose, and he's all but made it a second profession. He cut his teeth at the post level, as vice commander, commander and adjutant. His enthusiasm and reputation earned him more responsibility – district commander, department commander, department membership chairman, and a dozen or so other positions. Nationally, he's headed the Economic, Legislative and National Security commissions.

"The reason I first joined was to help out," Dellinger says. "I never really sought office. There was always somebody calling and saying, 'We need you to do this.' The opportunities I was given, I did to the best of my ability."

After a two-year campaign that's taken him to nearly every one of the Legion's 55 departments, he now has the top job. In August, Legionnaires elected Dellinger national commander at their 95th National Convention in Houston. But he's the first to say it's not about him. It's about continuing a legacy that stretches back to the Great War.

"We have a lot of people doing good things for our veterans and our communities around the country," he says. "I just want to be a part of that."

Born to build Dellinger's family came from Virginia's Shenandoah Valley and, before that, Germany's Black Forest. They were cabinetmakers, and Dellinger followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps by becoming a carpenter.

By 9, he was delivering Vienna's *Evening Star*, and his route expanded tremendously when 4,000 new houses went up. For signing new subscribers, Dellinger won a trip to the 1964 World's Fair in New York – the farthest he'd ever been from home.

"A guy and I snuck into Shea Stadium to see part of the All-Star Game," he says. "That was fun."

At 13, he was drafted into the family trade. Grover Dellinger, a World War II Navy Seabee who had built airstrips in the South Pacific, put his sons to work sweeping floors and laying tile. Eventually Dellinger would start his own construction business, but not before he went to school and spent time in the military.

His older brother, David, was a tech sergeant in the Air Force, flying into Vietnam on a C5A transport. Dellinger, the first of his parents' four children to go to college, took the ROTC path.

He graduated with a criminology degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and thought he might be sent overseas, too.

"I was ready," he says. "I had no qualms at all about going to Vietnam to fight for our country. Isn't that the American way? Doesn't everybody feel that way?"

It didn't happen, though. The United States was withdrawing its forces, and Dellinger stayed at Fort Benning, Ga., where he was an officer of the day with the military police. There was occasional excitement, such as the trial of 2nd Lt. William Calley, who'd been charged with murder for his role in the My Lai massacre and was under house arrest. Dellinger and his MPs made sure Calley got to the courtroom and back.

He was assigned to the Army Reserve's 80th Training Command for the rest of his service, teaching drill instructors and conducting NCO academies as a weekend warrior. He separated in 1984 with the rank of captain.

Meanwhile, Dellinger had tested to become a police officer, but the reality was that he made more money at his father's company. He worked his way up to superintendent and decided to become his own boss in 1979.

"I built the Arlington County jail, so I did use my criminology degree," he says, laughing. "But you know you've really got to get out of the field when they implode your building and build a new one because it's out of date."

Hometown pride Dellinger and his wife of 25 years, Margaret, live in a 90-year-old colonial-style home in old Vienna. As befits a history buff, they've stuffed it with antiques, some made by or handed down from family – a three-wood table and children's rocking chair crafted by Dellinger's grandfather, a turn-of-the-century cherry china cabinet from Margaret's grandmother, a wooden refrigerator (1910), a hall tree (early 1900s), and a barley twist table (1880s). On the kitchen counter is an old piglet's trough they use as a spice rack.

The couple briefly dated in the early '80s, but the relationship didn't go anywhere. Five years later, they met again, playing co-ed softball. After the game, they went out for a couple of beers, and something clicked.

"We got to talking and danced a bit, and I said, 'What do you think about trying to date again?'" Dellinger says. This time it lasted, and after asking Margaret's mother if he could have her daughter's hand, they wed. They have a son, Scott, and daughter, Anne.

LEFT: At Manassas National Battlefield Park, Dellinger looks out on the fields where Union and Confederate forces clashed for the first time July 21, 1861. Photo by Tom Stratman

“When we got married, I wanted to live in Maryland,” Margaret admits. “He said, ‘No, we’re going to live in Vienna. You’ll love it.’ And I really do. It has a small-town feel in a big city.”

They’ve invested time and energy into helping the community maintain its appeal. Both are members of Historic Vienna, a group that promotes and preserves the town’s heritage, and Dellinger was on the board of directors. He was also vice mayor and served three terms as a town councilman.

“Dan has been part of the fabric of the town for many years,” says Mercury Payton, Vienna’s town manager. “He has an outlook that is town first and service oriented. He is easy to talk to and positive about every aspect of the town. I can always pick up the phone and ask for his insight, because he has so many deep roots here.”

Dellinger’s civic career started more than a decade ago, when he went before the town to get permits and zoning for a building. Concerned that Vienna’s architectural review board was headed in the wrong direction, Dellinger said he wanted to be on the board – and before long, he was appointed. “There was such a mismatch of buildings and no cohesiveness,” he says. “It just wouldn’t have been attractive.”

Fifteen miles from Washington, D.C., Vienna manages to hold onto the character and activities of everyday America, with enviable schools, clean streets, and holiday parades and celebrations that swell the town to three times its size. That’s why it’s a popular place to live and raise a family, Dellinger says.

Best-kept secret For decades, Dyer-Gunnell Post 180 has been serving the people of Vienna, a fact that helped reel in Dellinger when he was recruited to join the Legion 32 years ago.

He loves to tell the story. One of his employees needed to borrow a wheelbarrow, and asked if he’d mind dropping it off at the local American Legion. No problem. Dellinger figured he’d grab a drink while he was there. Inside, three guys sat at the corner of the bar watching “F Troop.”

“Are you a veteran?” one of the men asked. Dellinger nodded, and they started talking.

“After a while, he says, ‘You have \$15 on you?’ I say, ‘Yes, I do.’ He says, ‘Congratulations. You’re the newest member of Post 180.’”



Dellinger is a life member of American Legion Dyer-Gunnell Post 180, where he’s been judge advocate for 20 years. The post is named for Cpl. George Dyer and Pvt. Clarence Gunnell, two Virginian soldiers who died in World War I.

Photo by Tom Strattman

As Dellinger was leaving, Joe Bare, an old high school buddy, was coming in, and they quickly caught up. Bare headed the post nominating committee, and wondered if Dellinger would be interested in volunteering a couple of hours a month. Sure he would. At the next meeting, he was initiated as a member and promptly elected post adjutant.

“The best part is that the three guys sitting at the bar were all World War II veterans and past post commanders,” Dellinger says. “They took me under their wing and taught me everything about The American Legion and what it did in our community: playgrounds, a children’s Christmas party, Legion Baseball, the flags up and down Main Street. Those are put up by the Legion, not the town. We do a lot.”

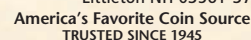
In the years since, he’s spearheaded a number of additions and improvements to Post 180, including putting a second floor on the building. Dellinger floated the idea as post commander in 1986 and 1987, requesting permission to pay for studies. In 2002, the post finally got a permit to raise the roof and opened Patriot Hall, a spacious room that can accommodate 200 guests for weddings, parties and other events. An adjoining foyer has two large display cases – one for military uniforms, helmets, patches and photos, and another for the trophy collection of the post’s Legion Baseball team.

“I got the idea from a post in Connecticut,” Dellinger says.



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Photo by Tom Strattman

Top Ten Things You Don't Know About Dan Dellinger

10. When he built a house on Chesapeake Bay, he couldn't find a local place that sold furnishings. So he opened a gift and antique shop called Nautiques, which he and Margaret owned for 12 years.

9. His favorite actor is Harrison Ford. "I liked him in 'Patriot Games' and 'Clear and Present Danger.'"

8. In high school, he played the upright bass in a jazz band, the Deltones, that did weekend gigs.

7. When cooking, he emulates celebrity chef and restaurateur Bobby Flay, whose Food Network show introduced him to the joys of smoked paprika and other spices.

6. He doesn't like foul language.

5. He takes Margaret to the Caribbean every five years. Now that he's retired, he'd like to make that trip every two years. You won't find him lying on the beach, though. "I like to snorkel. I've got to be in the water."

4. He started college as a music major, but student teaching put an end to that. "I didn't have a good time with younger kids, and I said, 'This isn't going to happen.'"

3. The last movie he saw at the theater is "42," about the life of baseball player Jackie Robinson.

2. There are people who talk in their sleep, and there are people like Dellinger, who, thanks to a lifetime in the construction industry, does equations in his sleep.

1. He's a perfectionist, and he acknowledges that some people might see him as hard-nosed. "I'm a caring person, though. I actually have a soft heart."

He adopted another post's idea of a brick campaign, paving the entry to Patriot Hall with bricks purchased and placed in the memory of deceased veterans or as a tribute to the service of those still living.

Norm Fisette, a World War II and Korean War veteran who serves on Post 180's executive committee, says these kinds of projects – and his firm grasp of Legion policy and procedure – make Dellinger a valued leader and mentor among local veterans and across Virginia.

"They know Dan has done a lot of work for this post," Fisette says. "People rely on him to keep us straight in a lot of ways. He'll make an excellent national commander. He's extremely qualified and will serve the Legion well."

Dellinger's theme for his year in office is "Building for Tomorrow – Today." In a way, being commander isn't too different from his job as senior project manager at Chamberlain Construction, the general contracting firm from which he retired in June.

There, he specialized in rebuilding and restoring aging churches – work that required him to respect and revere the original structures while figuring out how to make them fresh and functional for new generations.

Thanks to a user-friendly website and social media, the Legion's message is reaching more veterans than ever before. But Dellinger is concerned that potential members simply don't know enough about what the Legion has done. They don't know that for nearly a century the Legion has been veterans' truest friend.

"I always say we're the second best-kept secret than the Masonic Lodge, and it's true," he says. "We're not promoting ourselves enough. We have a rich history, but is that enough to keep going forward? We need members if we're going to help our veterans and help our communities."

The problem is that we're just not asking, Dellinger continues. "You'd be amazed how many times people say, 'Oh yeah, I've read about you. I've been meaning to join. I just haven't done it.' That's because nobody's come up to them and asked them. Our veterans aren't the same veterans who joined the Legion in 1919 or 1945. We have to do some evolving and adapting as we swing toward our 100th anniversary.

"We have a great foundation, but now it's time to do a little renovation." 🌿

Matt Grills is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.

New amplified phone lets you hear AND see the conversation.

They came in **PEACE**

Beirut veterans haven't forgotten the 1983 bombing that killed 241 Americans and hastened a U.S. exit. Nor have our enemies.

BY ALAN W. DOWD



President Ronald Reagan called it “hideous” and “insane.” His defense secretary, Caspar Weinberger, called it “an impossible mission.” *The New York Times* described it as “a haunting scene.” A Marine who was there called it “a dirty and bloody war.”

Beirut, 1983. Most Americans have either forgotten or never heard about what happened there 30 Octobers ago. But the men who were there haven’t forgotten – nor have America’s enemies.

‘This ain’t that bad’ The U.S. intervention in Lebanon began with the best of intentions. After almost a decade of war involving too many sides to count – PLO terrorists; Christian militias; Sunnis, Shiites and Druzes; the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF); the Israeli and Syrian armies – the idea was to deploy an international peacekeeping force to stabilize Lebanon, or at least to prevent the war from further metastasizing.

In August 1982, Reagan sent a small force of 80 Marines to facilitate the movement of Palestinian militiamen out of Beirut.

Later that same year, he sent 1,200 Marines as part of a congressionally authorized multinational force to both serve as a buffer between the warring factions and shore up the Lebanese government. Italy and France also sent troops to participate in the mission.

But good intentions don’t ensure good outcomes. In April 1983, a suicide bomber attacked the U.S. embassy, killing 16 Americans and foreshadowing what was to come.

Large contingents of Marines began arriving soon after the embassy attack.

“It looked like a peaceful city,” recalls John Jackson, who served with Charlie Battery, 1st

Battalion, 10th Marines, which provided artillery support to Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. But soon after hitting the beach, Jackson realized he was in a war

zone. “We would look up at the mountains and watch the militias fight at nighttime,” he says.

“I didn’t have a sense of the situation,” says Craig Renshaw, who served with 1/8 Marines. “I was fresh out of boot camp. I thought, ‘This ain’t that bad. We’ll just sit here until something happens.’”

As it turns out, that was precisely the problem with Washington’s approach to Lebanon.

Keeping peace and counting rounds Reagan’s national security team was divided. Weinberger, who died in 2006, was concerned about the mission from the outset. “There was something like 27 or 28 separate armed groups, all of which had only one thing in common: they opposed us,” he explained in a PBS interview.

Weinberger worried about “very vague rules of engagement,” warned that the Marine force would be “a sitting duck,” and argued that a buffer force only makes sense “if you insert it between two warring factions that have agreed there should be a buffer force.”

“I felt very strongly that they should not be there,” Weinberger recalled. “They had no mission but to sit at the airport. I begged the president at least to pull them back and put them back on their transports as a more defensible position. I guess I wasn’t persuasive enough.”

Weinberger’s worries were well-founded. “Until mid-August, we were just a show of force in place,” Renshaw explains. “Then we started getting hit – mortar rounds, snipers. We were ducking and dodging. But we couldn’t shoot back.”

Jackson adds, “We were supposed to be peacekeepers, but there wasn’t much peace to be kept.” He recalls how “we started as neutrals.” But when the Marines were ordered to train the LAF, “the factions started to see us as no longer neutral.”

Indeed, by late summer, U.S. warships began firing rounds in support of the LAF. The naval bombardments were “convincing proof the U.S. was no longer neutral,” as historian Patrick Brogan notes in his book *World Conflicts*.

Soon, USS *New Jersey*, with its massive guns, took up station off Lebanon.

“I felt relief when I saw the *New Jersey*,” Renshaw says. “Just to see it go up and down the coastline, you thought, ‘Now we mean business.’”

Workers dig through the rubble of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon after a Shiite suicide bomber drove a vehicle packed with explosives into the Beirut airport’s aviation safety building, which housed the headquarters of the 8th Marine Battalion. Corbis

Yet Washington remained halfhearted, and the mission remained nebulous.

“Marines are fighters,” Jackson says. “We wanted to be let loose. And at times, they let us do what we were capable of, but most of the time we were held in check.”

For instance, when fired upon, a Marine unit would have to get on the radio, report that it had taken fire, report a visual ID on the source of fire, and then request permission to return fire.

“If I did return fire, they would count my rounds at the end of the day,” Jackson recalls.

Renshaw’s unit found a clever way to deal with the straitjacket rules of engagement. “We started to make sure our radios didn’t work,” he says with a wry chuckle. That meant that the highest-ranking Marine on location could authorize return fire.

Through it all, America’s enemies were watching. “They would hit us and watch and wait,” Renshaw says. “And they figured out that our hands were tied.”

Marines were being killed in small numbers during the summer of 1983. Writing in his memoir years later, Reagan recounted the words of a grief-stricken father who asked during a condolence call from the president, “Are we in Lebanon for any reason worth my son’s life?”

Reagan’s response was, like the Marines’ mission, murky. “Brave men and women have always been willing to give up their lives in the defense of freedom, and that’s what our Marines are doing in the Middle East,” he said.

That didn’t convince most Americans, Reagan’s diary entries reveal. “The people just don’t know why we’re there,” he wrote on Sept. 30, 1983.

‘Gone – just a cloud of smoke’ As dawn broke on Oct. 23, Renshaw had just finished up his watch on duty in a machine-gun pit on the perimeter of the Beirut airport. He crawled into his rack for some much-needed rest. Then it happened.

“It was a rumble, a roar,” he remembers. “The bomb shook me. It shook everything. We ran out and looked toward battalion and it was gone – just a cloud of smoke.” The radio traffic was “crazy and chaotic. Some guys were saying it was artillery, but I knew it wasn’t that.”

In fact, it was a Mercedes truck crammed with 2,500 pounds of explosives. The truck had been waved through an LAF checkpoint, as *The New York Times* later reported; Renshaw’s gun nest was about 700 yards southeast of the area where it got through. The truck veered across a four-lane highway, gathered speed in an empty parking lot and hurtled toward its target: the Marine battalion headquarters.

As the suicide bomber raced through the barriers, one Marine radioed, “A large truck is bearing down on me.” Another Marine fired off at least five rounds. Yet “another threw himself in front of the speeding, explosive-filled truck,” according to the *Times*. But it was too late. The truck crashed through an iron fence and leveled the building, leaving a crater 30 feet deep.

Jackson’s unit was a 40-minute drive away from the airport.

“A day before the attack, we were assigned to train an LAF artillery unit up near the Chouf Mountains northeast of Beirut,” Jackson explains, remembering how upset he was about being sent on the training mission because it meant he would miss a USO concert.

“When we got word of the attack, we tried to make our way back to headquar-

ters,” he recalls. “But because of all the fighting and all the checkpoints, it took us two hours.”

He adds, “We had lots of intel about threats – things like RPGs,



U.S. Marines bunk down at the front line near the Beirut airport on Nov. 7, 1983, less than a mile from fierce fighting between the Lebanese army and Shiite militia.

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grenades, snipers – but suicide bombing was never brought up.”

Renshaw’s unit was ordered to take up positions on the perimeter. He’s thankful for that. “I was lucky,” he says. “I didn’t have to see what was under all that rubble.”

The attack claimed 241 Americans. A nearly simultaneous attack hit the French base, killing 58.

There is broad consensus today that Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed militant/terror group founded in Lebanon in 1982, orchestrated the operation.

Resolve and rhetoric After the bombing, positions near the airport came under increased sniper and mortar attack. U.S. and French warplanes responded. On a single day in December 1983, 28 carrier-borne U.S. planes struck Syrian targets. That same month, *New Jersey* opened up on Syrian and terrorist targets. In early February 1984, as *New Jersey*’s museum reports, the venerable battleship fired almost 300 shells at Druze and Syrian positions.

Reagan vowed to dig in, rhetorically asking, “If we were to leave Lebanon now, what message would that send to those who foment instability and terrorism?” The heavy guns seemed to underline his resolve.

But Reagan’s rhetoric and *New Jersey*’s volleys were little more than covering fire for an orderly withdrawal. “Once the terrorist attacks started, there was no way that we could really contribute to the original mission by staying there,” he conceded.

And so, on Feb. 2, 1984, Reagan ordered the “redeployment of the Marines from Beirut airport to their ships offshore,” realizing something he should have known before: that U.S. forces couldn’t remain in Lebanon “and be in the war on a halfway basis.”

“Perhaps the idea of a suicide car-bomber committing mass murder to gain instant entry into paradise was so foreign to our values,” he confessed in his autobiography, “that it did not create in us the concern for the Marines’ safety that it should have.”

Last impressions Looking back across the decades, we know that the Beirut bombing was not an aberration, but rather a jarring glimpse of the terror that was to come: Khobar Towers, Kenya and Tanzania, the *Cole*, Madrid, London, Mumbai, Bali and 9/11.

In fact, Gen. Tommy Franks, former CENTCOM commander, traces a line from Beirut to 9/11.

“What did we see happen in 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon? We saw the interests of the United States of America attacked by terrorists,” he observed in a 2007 interview, pointing to a long list of attacks after Beirut that went largely unanswered. “I do believe there is a connection,” he said, “an indication served up to terrorists over the course of almost two decades that says it is OK to attack the interests of the United States of America without fear of serious retribution.”

Interestingly, Osama bin Laden confirmed Franks’ diagnosis. “Where was this false courage of yours when the explosion in Beirut took place?” the terror leader howled, calling it “a pleasure” to see America “defeated in the three Islamic cities of Beirut, Aden and Mogadishu.”

In short, if the decision to go into Lebanon was risky, the way Washington decided to pull out proved disastrous, which leads us to some lessons of Beirut:

- Presidents must be careful where and how they deploy U.S. troops. If the policymakers and public aren’t fully committed, as was later articulated in the “Weinberger Doctrine,” it’s better to hold back than jump in. U.S. forces should not be asked to keep the peace between sides that haven’t made peace – and should never be left as sitting ducks.
- U.S. interventions need to have clear objectives. Commanders and their troops need to understand what their mission is, which means policymakers need to define that mission from the outset.
- Having a clear mission with clear objectives is only part of the equation. Once deployed, troops need to have the rules of engagement necessary to protect themselves and prevail. “Anytime you send a force in with its hands tied,” Renshaw argues, “they really don’t need to be there.”
- Policymakers need to prepare for the worst – and need to prepare the public for the worst. “It’s ridiculous to get into something and not think that the worst-case scenario can happen – and then not have a response,” Jackson explains.
- Finally, last impressions may be more important than first impressions. The way U.S. forces leave – and the reason they do – can have a lasting effect on the enemy. Reagan sensed that, as underscored by his rhetorical question about the consequences of leaving Lebanon. His instincts were right. Hasty withdrawals from Lebanon in 1983 and Somalia a decade later sent the wrong signal to bin Laden and his followers. 🌿

Alan W. Dowd is a contributing editor to The American Legion Magazine.

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ACTIVE DUTY

Rhino snot



U.S. Navy photo by Greg Vojtko

In desperate need of a quick, efficient, environmentally safe way to tamp down the dust clouds created on battlefield landing zones and even to create those landing zones, the U.S. military found a solution at Environmental Products & Applications, creators of Envirotac II – a sprayable soil-stabilization/dust-abatement material that can turn the dustiest, most unstable patch of land into a drivable road or helicopter-ready LZ. The troops who use the wonder material just call it “Rhino Snot.”

Don’t mistake the unpleasant nickname for anything other than a term of endearment. Troops at Camp Rhino in Afghanistan, where the stuff was first used back in 2002, coined the term. As Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Christopher Okula of Navy Public Affairs Support Element West reports, “the name just, well, stuck.”

Indeed it did. The people at Environmental Products & Applications liked the troops’ name for their innovative product so much that they trademarked it.

“You can’t give yourself your own nickname. You have to earn it,” Justin Vermillion, the company’s vice president, said in a recent interview. “I feel there is no better testament in our industry than to proudly say our military chooses to use our product.”

Okula describes Rhino Snot as “a thick, white goop resembling Elmer’s school glue.” As Environmental Products & Applications explains, “when applied to soils or sands, it will penetrate and coat the surface. Upon drying, Envirotac forms a waterproof, UV-resistant, solid bond which binds the soil particles. Increasing the concentration of Envirotac II can create highly durable surfaces that will be pliable and hard enough to minimize surface damage and withstand heavy traffic.”

Rhino Snot can even turn soils and sands that have little to no load-bearing capacity into roads, makeshift airstrips and parking lots.

Rhino Snot was used to great effect in Iraq to smother the extremely fine dust created by swarms of helicopters. The troops called Iraq’s dangerous dust “moon dust,” and it played havoc with rotor aircraft. But as *Stars and Stripes* reported, that ended when combat engineers began spraying Rhino Snot.

According to the *Toronto Sun*, the Canadian province of Alberta recently approved the use of Rhino Snot in the province’s “ongoing war on dust” in certain towns still relying on dirt roads.

— Alan W. Dowd

ENERGY

Air Force gusher

Air Force officials are considering leasing land to Sunset Exploration and Exxon Mobil Corp. to drill for oil and gas on Vandenberg Air Force Base, AP reports. Offshore areas near the California base are being eyed. The project also needs approval from the California State Lands Commission and the California Coastal Commission. If approved, the Vandenberg wells would be the first new offshore drilling lease in California waters since the 1960s, according to AP.



VERBATIM

“Why would a multimillionaire TV sensation give up that work to run for a congressional seat?”

Anonymous GOP official, on party operatives’ efforts to persuade Willie Robertson of A&E’s hit show “Duck Dynasty” to run for the House seat of retiring Rep. Rodney Alexander, R, La. Source: *Washington Examiner*



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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Lugar talks Korea, Iran, nukes



Following his 36-year career in the Senate, Richard Lugar now spends his time running The Lugar Center, which focuses on global issues such as nonproliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, food and energy security, and foreign assistance. For his work, Lugar will receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is given to those who make a lasting contribution to U.S. security or national interests, world peace, or cultural or other significant public or private endeavors.

In May, Lugar traveled to South Korea to meet with an international delegation about issues related to North Korea. He recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine* about the Korean peninsula and other global hotspots.

How would you advise South Korea and its allies going forward?

The economy and the prospects for progress in North Korea are very, very dismal. There simply is such a deficit in terms of education, job opportunities, basic food stuffs and so forth. The South Koreans, by and large, look forward to a time when the peninsula will be unified. But they have a sober feeling of reality about the length of costs of doing that. A lot of patience will be required because the regime in North Korea ... has managed to suppress dissidents in a caste system of obedience to the government and rewards that are commensurate with that. These things will not go away without a change in the regime. And for the moment, at least, that is not going to be forthcoming.

What's your view on what U.S. policy should be regarding Iran?

We – the United States, as well as the citizens of Israel – have made clear that an Iranian nuclear program that moves toward weaponization is unacceptable. Ultimately, this means that we are on a course of taking military action. That can take many forms, including the use of bombers. But given the fact that much of the program is deep in caves, and there may be other aspects that are not well known or not well publicized, that action may require more covert activity.

What needs to happen before such action?

It is very important for the public in both the United States and Israel to understand the potential costs to our service personnel and equipment, whether it be aircraft or whatever else we want to use. The aftermath in terms of potential retaliation on the citizens of Israel or even American troops nearby in Afghanistan or elsewhere in the Middle East.

What would you consider success in your push for nuclear nonproliferation worldwide?

The best view is that we continue with a new START treaty to reduce in the United States and Russia the nuclear weapons that we've pledged to produce, that we work with our friends in Asia so that there are no new nuclear powers, and that North Korea give up its program eventually. And likewise in the Middle East, where we work to make sure that Iran does not develop one, and thereby encourage a whole raft of others. In short, we hold fast to where we are as opposed to a world where the other nations feel, whether for their means of defense or prestige, that they need to get into the nuclear business.

Read the full interview online:

 www.legion.org/magazine



Photo by Sgt. Danielle Bacon

VETERANS DAY

Join the parade

Come one, come all, to America's Parade in New York City, the nation's largest Veterans Day event.

That's the invitation to every member of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion from Sean Powers, commander of New York County American Legion and coordinator of the parade's Legion contingent.

"We want to have the most people we can marshal from throughout the Legion Family," Powers says.

This year's theme is women in service. The parade grand marshal will be retired Gen. Ann Dunwoody, the U.S. military's first female four-star general.

Powers encourages participants to wear their Legion caps during the 1.3-mile march. "Dress your best while considering not only the weather conditions but any physical limitations you may have," he says.

Those interested in marching with the Legion Family delegation should email parade@americanlegion.com. Powers will post details at www.americanlegion.com/_/Parade.html.

 www.americasparade.org

SOCIETY

Military tops confidence rankings

The U.S. military tops a recent poll conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life that asked Americans which vocations and occupations contribute "a lot to society's well-being."

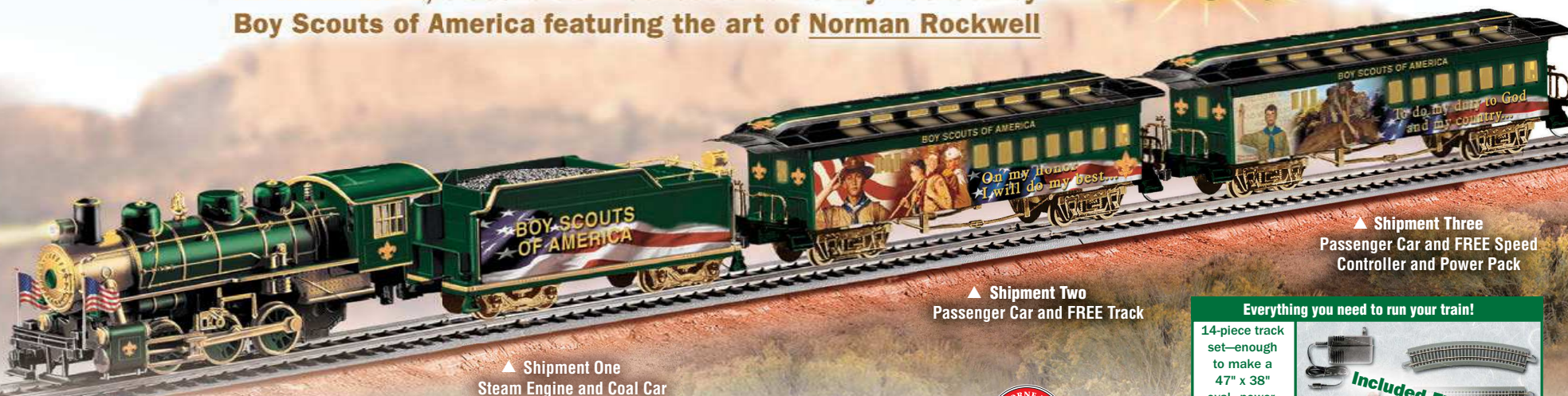
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|----------------|------------|
| Military | 78 percent |
| Teachers | 72 percent |
| Physicians | 66 percent |
| Scientists | 65 percent |
| Engineers | 63 percent |
| Clergy | 37 percent |
| Artists | 30 percent |
| Journalists | 28 percent |
| Business execs | 24 percent |
| Lawyers | 18 percent |

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HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

Minnesota veterans cemetery portraits honor vets of all branches

The Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery's Committal Hall is getting a unique memorial: five 8-foot-by-10-foot oil paintings representing the five military branches.

The Army painting is finished and on display; the Navy's is almost finished. The project, funded entirely by donations, will take about a decade to complete. Artist Charles Kapsner says the project especially honors his father, who served during World War II.

Raymond Stumpf is a former Seabee diver and model for the "lone sailor"

hugging a little girl in the Navy painting. "I think of my two daughters and how many times I've done this coming and going," he says.

The Army painting includes a homeless veteran, which Kapsner says is important to the works' integrity. When he was first approached for the job, he insisted on showing the hardships suffered by some veterans.

"I said, 'If you're looking for a person to paint all the toys of war, you've got the wrong person,'" Kapsner recalls.



Photo by Veterans Educational Historic Project

Stumpf, who is receiving palliative care for terminal cancer, hopes the memorial will give loved ones a way to see him after he passes away. "When my family visits, I'll be in the naval painting, which is an honor," he says.

Submit your story or your family's military history for the Honor & Remembrance web page.

 www.legion.org/honor

VERBATIM



Veer

This is exactly what's not supposed to happen – a rogue agency keeping secrets from the people who are supposed to oversee them.

Mark Jaycox, a policy analyst with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, on an internal report revealing that the National Security Agency violated privacy rules thousands of times, despite White House claims that U.S. surveillance programs have not been abused

Source: CBS News

SHOOTING SPORTS

New Mexico, Arizona teens win air rifle competition

Rachel Martin and Alan Rodriguez held onto their No. 1 spots throughout the American Legion Junior 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship in Colorado Springs, Colo., on Aug. 10, despite close competition.

Martin, sponsored by John P. Elliott Post 85 in Los Lunas, N.M., captured the Precision championship with a score of 2,469.2 out of a possible 2,509. Rodriguez, sponsored by John J. Morris Post 62 in Peoria, Ariz., won the Sporter title with a score of 2,307.2 out of a possible 2,509.

"It was intense in the finals, but I put it out of my mind and focused on every single shot," Rodriguez says.

Martin, a University of Nebraska freshman, said her victory was a great start as she headed off to college. "I knew I was going to have to work hard for the win," Martin says. "I had to calm down and think about what I was doing, not take any shortcuts and focus more."

Both received \$2,500 scholarships donated by Sons of The American Legion. "I spoke to a few families here at the tournament, and they said that the American Legion volunteers treated them like family," says SAL Commander Chris Huntzinger, who presented the awards. "That's because we are the American Legion Family."



Photo by Eldon Lindsay

PRECISION

Rachel Martin,
Peralta, N.M., 2,469.2
Jack Anderson,
Franklin, Pa., 2,467.4
Casey Lutz,
Meridian, Idaho, 2,454.9
Ariana Grabowski,
Wind Ridge, Pa., 2,453.1
Rachael Schoenrock,
Beatrice, Neb., 2,451.6

SPORTER

Alan Rodriguez,
Phoenix, 2,307.2
Jeffery Garcia,
Albuquerque, 2,297.2
Brantley Santrock,
Rocky Mount, Va., 2,296.3
Michael Barton,
Rocky Mount, Va., 2,288.5
Kevin Hamilton,
Zion, Ill., 2,284.5



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LEGION BASEBALL

BROOKLAWN TAKES ITS THIRD WORLD SERIES

On Aug. 20, the Brooklawn, N.J., Post 72 American Legion Baseball team claimed the championship it lost during last year's American Legion World Series (ALWS) in Shelby, N.C., earning its third title in 22 years.

In 2012, Brooklawn was scoreless against New Orleans in the championship game, but this year the team turned the tables by defeating Petaluma, Calif., 10-0. Before Petaluma secured a spot in the championship game, it eliminated 2011 World Series team and crowd favorite Waipahu, Hawaii, with an 8-2 win.

In the series' final game, Brooklawn pounded out 17 hits, scoring in every inning except the third and ending the game with four runs in the bottom of the seventh. The score stood at 9-0. Then Brooklawn third baseman Nick Cieri stepped to the plate, slammed one to right field and sent shortstop Phil Dickinson across home plate to end the game on a 10-run mercy rule.

"We have a lot of new and younger guys on our team, but like I've said to people back home, we don't rebuild – we reload," said Fran Kinsey, right fielder for Brooklawn. "That's what happened this year, and we got here to the World Series. There's no better feeling in the world."

The ALWS is familiar ground for Brooklawn Post 72. Since 1960, the team has made 15 appearances in the World Series, was runner-up in 1984 and 2012, and won in 1991 and 2001.

"We have a lot of history in this program," said Mike Shawaryn, Brooklawn's starting pitcher and a returning player from the 2012 series. "I've played for Post 72 for four years, but out of all those years this is the best by far."

Brooklawn coach Josh Copskey, a former member of the team, played in the ALWS three consecutive years: 1998, 1999 and 2000. And as a coach since 2005, Copskey has helped lead Brooklawn to the ALWS for three consecutive years.

"It's great to give back," Copskey said. "Right before the (championship) game, the players got together and said, 'This is our moment, and we are going to walk this dream together.' It's really neat that they got to experience that."

In the end, Shelby broke last year's ALWS paid-attendance record, selling 104,726 tickets to eclipse last year's previous record of 101,925.

– Cameran Richardson



Waipahu, Hawaii, shortstop Reid Akau tries to turn a double play as Austin Millet of Gonzales, La., slides into second base. Eldon Lindsay photos

During the World Series' closing ceremonies, players from three teams took home the annual American Legion Baseball awards.

George W. Rulon Player of the Year and Louisville Slugger Batting Champion

Anthony Harrold, Brooklawn, N.J.

Rawlings Big Stick Award

Anthony Bender, Petaluma, Calif.

Dr. Irvin L. "Click" Cowger RBI Memorial Award

Robert Busse, Petaluma, Calif., with 14 RBIs

Bob Feller Pitching Award

Mike Shawaryn, Brooklawn, N.J., with 32 strikeouts in regional and ALWS games

James F. Daniel Jr. Memorial Sportsmanship Award

Robbie Podorsky, Gonzales, La.

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AWARDS

Legion honors service academy graduates

Each year, The American Legion sponsors awards given to exceptional students at each of the five military academies. Last spring, the Legion's national vice commanders presented the 2013 awards to the recipients at their graduation ceremonies.



Ens. Michael DeLong
Coppell, Texas

DeLong received the Legion's award for the highest marks in English, history and government courses at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. He is currently attending Naval Intelligence School in Virginia. National Vice Commander John E. Neylon presented the award.



2nd Lt. Zebulon Hanley
Denver

Hanley received the Legion's Outstanding Cadet in Academic Performance Award at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. He will study operations research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, after which he plans to serve as an operations research analyst in the Air Force. National Vice Commander Jeanette Rae presented the award.



2nd Lt. Drew Long
Newton, Iowa

Long received the Legion's award for the highest standing in chemistry at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. He plans to attend the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, specializing in general surgery or emergency medicine. National Vice Commander David R. Hall presented the award.



Ens. Frank Joseph Osborne
Burke, Va.

Osborne received the Legion's award in the category of national security at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, N.Y. National Vice Commander Glenn Hickman presented the award.



Ens. Tyler Vieira
Dumfries, Va.

Vieira received the Legion's award for excellence in athletics at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. The pitcher is the academy's all-time saves leader, with 22, and was named to the third team of the New England Intercollegiate Baseball Association's All-New England team last spring and in 2010. National Vice Commander James Hallie Holland presented the award.

GALLERY



U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno presents a Purple Heart medal to Spc. Thomas Wirthlin during a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Azizullah in Afghanistan's Kandahar Province on Aug. 7. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Ashley Bell

EDUCATION

Benefits available for non-degree programs



Q: *I am planning on attending a community college in the near future. My preferred path is a series of certificate of completion (CCL) programs so that I can be prepared for the relevant industry exams. Can I use the Post-9/11 GI Bill (with*

housing stipend) to do that, or is it strictly for degree-based programs? For example, will VA pay for a CCL in the Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP) program?

A: Yes, but to receive payment for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the non-degree program must be approved by VA. Go to www.gibill.va.gov for a listing of approved programs and colleges. Click on the "Choosing a School" tab.

Valerie Heffner, a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona, is a past vice president of the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators. askvalerie@legion.org

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BACK

FRONT

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PERSONAL FINANCE



Don't get spooked when weighing changes to Medicare coverage

The Medicare annual enrollment period starts Oct. 15 – about the time that kids are deciding who or what they're going to be for Halloween. 'Tis the season for some harmless scares.

Not when it comes to Medicare coverage, though. Many seniors are scared to make changes to their coverage, intimidated by all the options available. But adjusting your plan can be a good thing.

■ **Change to or from a Medicare Advantage plan.** With a Medicare Advantage plan (known as Part C), you normally pay a monthly premium and receive your original Medicare (parts A and B) benefits through a private insurer. These plans typically give you some extra coverage (dental and prescriptions, for example) and help you pay less out of pocket than if you just went with original Medicare.

Since the coverage provided by these plans can vary widely, as can your annual out-of-pocket expenses, it pays to shop around. Your choice of physicians may be restricted depending on the type of plan you have. If physician choice is important to you, original Medicare paired with a Medicare Supplement policy may be right for you.

■ **Switch from one Medicare Advantage plan to another.** Even if you already have a Medicare Advantage plan, you may be able to find a better one. You could select a higher-rated plan, or move to one that offers lower monthly premiums, co-payments or a lower annual out-of-pocket cap. Or you might find a plan that adds additional coverage such as prescription drugs, dental or vision, that your current plan doesn't offer. This is helpful because what

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

might have been the right plan for you last year might not be now. Ideally, you could find the same or better coverage with lower overall costs.

■ **Join, drop or change a Medicare Prescription Drug plan (PDP).** You may join, drop or change a PDP (known as Part D) if you have original Medicare, if your Medicare Advantage plan does not cover prescription drugs, or if you already have an individual PDP

but want to explore other plans. While the general PDP rules are the same for all insurers, there can be significant differences between plans.

Monthly premiums, deductibles, co-payments and even restrictions on individual drugs may vary. To help choose the one that's best for you, make a list of your medications and spend some time with the Plan Finder at medicare.gov or usaa.com/legion. There you can enter your medications and compare deductibles, co-payments and overall estimated costs, as well as ratings of different plans.

Health-care costs can be the stuff of nightmares if you don't have the right coverage. So be proactive, do some research, and come January, enjoy the "treats" of your labor.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

 www.legion.org/focusonfinances

Have Medicare questions? Call USAA at (800) 292-8069.

VERBATIM

Any time you roll out a big government program like this, confusion is inevitable.



This confusion creates a tremendous opportunity for the fraudster.

Lois Greisman, associate director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection at the Federal Trade Commission, on the potential for scam artists to steal Americans' money and sensitive personal information under the guise of the Affordable Care Act. Cases range from fake insurance exchanges online to victims being threatened with jail if they don't purchase insurance cards to be eligible for coverage. *Source: CNBC*



SOCIETY

How Americans spend their free time

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' latest American Time Use Survey paints an interesting picture of what Americans do with their non-work time:

77 Minutes per day men spend on household activities such as housework, cooking and lawn care

130 Minutes per day women spend on those activities

36 Minutes per day men spend purchasing goods or services

50 Minutes per day women spend on those activities

24.6 Minutes per day men spend on recreation-related activities

14 Minutes per day women spend on recreation, sports and exercise



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Over the years, technology has made the way we live easier, safer and more convenient. In many cases, it's even made many products more affordable... (remember how much the first VCR used to cost?). Now, if you need some help in turning up the volume on the world around you, a new solution has been invented... it's called Perfect Choice HD™.

Perfect Choice HD is NOT a hearing aid. Hearing aids can only be sold by an audiologist or a licensed hearing instrument specialist following hearing tests and fitting appointments. Once they have you tested and fitted, you could pay as much as \$5000 for the product.

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glasses help millions who don't need prescription eye wear... and PSAP's can help those who simply want to turn up the volume. Now, thanks to the efforts of the doctor who leads a renowned hearing institute, there is Perfect Choice HD. It's a PSAP designed to accurately amplify sounds and deliver them to your ear. Because we've developed an efficient production process, we can make a great product at an affordable price. The unit has been designed to have an easily accessible battery, but it

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| Friendly Return Policy | 60 Days |

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ASK A SERVICE OFFICER

How to appoint a new representative



Tracy L. Davis
Department Service
Officer, Missouri

Q: Can I change my representing organization while my claim is in process?

A: A claimant, claimant's guardian or VA fiduciary may terminate his or her relationship with an individual representative or a

veterans service organization (VSO) at any time by first informing VA. You may appoint a new representative by using VA forms 21-22 or 21-22a, found online:

www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-21-22a-are.pdf

By appointing a new representative, the previous representative is automatically revoked. If you have not appointed a new representative but want to move forward to revoke representation by your current power of attorney, do the following:

- Write a statement using VA Form 21-4138 – www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-21-4138-are.pdf – to indicate that you no longer want to be represented by your current VSO or individual.
- Submit a copy of the statement by mail or hand delivery to VA and your current representative.
- Keep a copy of the letter or statement for your records.

Any new representative will want to review your claim to offer you the best guidance; this usually takes time. Some VSOs do not take representation when an appeal is active at the Board of Veterans Appeals, so don't wait to seek assistance. Review all letters from VA carefully and take any required steps to preserve your rights.

Find an American Legion-accredited service officer in your state:

www.legion.org/serviceofficers

Do you have a question for Department of Missouri Service Officer Tracy Davis about the claims process or veterans benefits in general? Send it to askso@legion.org.



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| CA residents must add 7.5% sales tax | | | \$ _____ | | |
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RAPID FIRE

GIVING

Uncharitable charities

An investigation by CNN, the *Tampa Bay Times* and the Center for Investigative Reporting recently exposed what the three label "America's worst charities." What these charities have in common, according to CNN, is that all "devote less than 4 percent of donations raised to direct cash aid." They also pay outside solicitors large amounts to raise donations.

For example, Kids Wish Network, which raises millions each year ostensibly to help dying children, earned the dubious distinction of worst of the worst. "In the past decade alone, Kids Wish has channeled nearly \$110 million donated for sick children to its corporate solicitors. An additional \$4.8 million has gone to pay the charity's founder and his own consulting firms. No charity in the nation has siphoned more money away from the needy over a longer period of time."

| RANK | CHARITY | TOTAL RAISED BY SOLICITORS | PAID TO SOLICITORS | PERCENT SPENT ON DIRECT CASH AID |
|------|--|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Kids Wish Network | \$127.8 million | \$109.8 million | 2.5 |
| 2 | Cancer Fund of America | \$98 million | \$80.4 million | 0.9 |
| 3 | Children's Wish Foundation International | \$96.8 million | \$63.6 million | 10.8 |
| 4 | American Breast Cancer Foundation | \$80.8 million | \$59.8 million | 5.3 |
| 5 | Firefighters Charitable Foundation | \$63.8 million | \$54.7 million | 8.4 |

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

Motel 6 offers travel savings for Legion, SAL members

Motel 6 has launched a new discount program with The American Legion to offer Legionnaires and Sons of The American Legion (SAL) members discounted rates on Motel 6 and Studio 6 room reservations across the United States and Canada.

With more than 1,100 properties across North America, Motel 6 offers the lowest price of any national hotel/motel chain and is pleased to help Legionnaires and SAL members save money on lodging while offering clean, comfortable rooms during their travels.

"Our discount program with The American Legion will give Legionnaires and SAL members a 15-percent discount on their rooms, wherever they choose to travel," said Jim Amorosa, president and chief executive officer of Motel 6. "We're grateful for the sacrifice and service of all Legionnaires and look forward to welcoming them at Motel 6."

Greg Roth, the Legion's director of Membership Support Services, added, "American Legion members are adventurous by nature, and many enjoy the thrills of travel. Our discount program with Motel 6 will benefit our members by allowing them to visit their favorite U.S. and Canadian destinations while saving on lodging."

Motel 6 offers a low price and great value without sacrificing comfort, and is currently undergoing a



chain-wide renovation program that brings a fresh, new design to guest rooms, featuring wood-effect flooring, flat-screen TVs, a vibrant color scheme and granite bathroom countertops. Standard amenities include free local phone calls, no long-distance access charges, free morning coffee, Wi-Fi Internet access and an expanded cable lineup. All Motel 6 properties welcome pets, and most locations offer swimming pools and guest laundry facilities.

To reserve a room and activate the 15-percent discount, Legionnaires and SAL members can log on to **www.motel6.com** and enter the access code **CP565474** during the booking process, or visit the Member Discount Programs page on the Legion's website – **www.legion.org/discounts/travel** – and enter the access code. Members can also use their discount when booking a room via the reservation line at **(800) 4-MOTEL6**.

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minutes— that's the problem with prepaid phones. Since there is no contract to sign, you are not locked in for years at a time and won't be subject to early termination fees. The U.S.-based customer service is knowledgeable and helpful and the phone gets service virtually anywhere in the continental U.S. Above all, you'll get one-touch access to a friendly, and helpful GreatCall operator. They can look up numbers, and even dial them for you! They are always there to help you when you need them.

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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

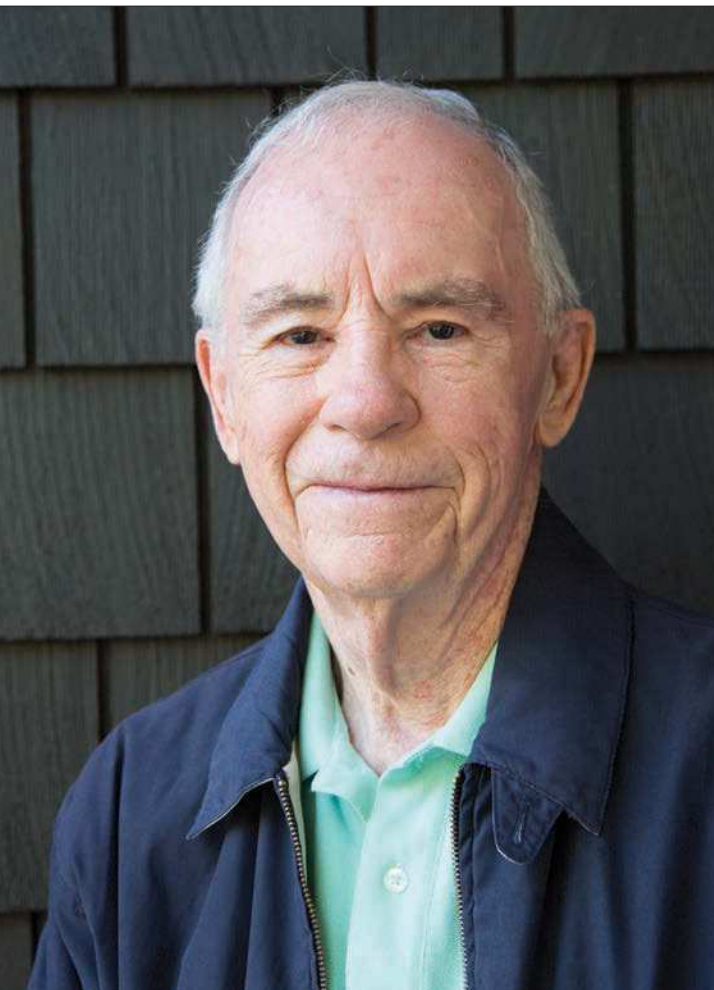
39th Ftr Sqdn Assn, San Antonio, 10/23-27, Linne Haddock, (719) 687-6425, lhaddock@mac.com; **100th Bomb Grp 8th AF (WWII)**, Savannah, GA, 10/16-20, Nancy Putnam, (414) 339-2818, nputnam51@gmail.com; **307th Bomb Wing Combined Bomber/Tanker Reunion**, 4/24-28, Bossier City, LA, Ivan McKinney, (318) 742-0895, mckinneyivan@bellsouth.net; **781st Bomb Sqdn 465th Bomb Grp**, Charleston, SC, 11/10-13, Orren Lee, (605) 339-1297, deee13@midco.net; **1987th Comm Sq (1974-1975)**, Cookeville, TN, 8/20-23, Jackie Case, (931) 651-1014, afliker26@hotmail.com; **7499th/7575th Grps & All Associated Sqdns and Units**, Albuquerque, NM, 10/11-13,

Eugene Trosterud, (240) 925-4226, creekmisty@hotmail.com; **B-58 Hustler Assn**, Fort Worth, TX, 5/1-4, Richard Bolcer, (817) 249-5019, rich92437@sbcglobal.net; **Laughlin AFB UPT Class 66-A**, Nashville, TN, 10/9-11, Phillip Budd, (931) 638-2015, prbudd60@bellsouth.net

ARMY

2nd Armd Cav 2nd Recon Sqdn (1957-1967), Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/1-3, Gene Gapinski, falcon63gene@yahoo.com; **2nd Eng Cbt Bn**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 5/1-4, Bob Fiedler, (607) 722-5491, rfiedler@stny.rr.com; **2nd Inf Div Florida Vets**, Titusville, FL, 10/18-20, Donald Calnan, (561) 742-5379, Zida.mail@charter.net; **3rd Field Hosp**

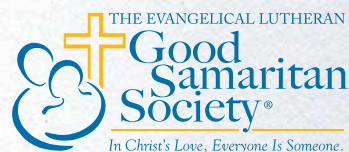
(Saigon), San Antonio, 11/8-10, Duane Thompson, (303) 459-4060, info@3field.rmhc.org; **42nd Inf Plt Scout Dog 101st Abn Div (Vietnam, 1966-1971)**, Branson, MO, 10/4-6, Jackie McIntyre, (612) 522-9377, 42ndmom@comcast.net; **65th Cbt Eng Bn (Vietnam)**, Branson, MO, 10/10-15, Ken Dixon, (706) 260-5661, ken_dixon49@yahoo.com; **78th Cbt Eng Bn SE Grp**, Greenville, SC, 10/6-8, Marcia Webb, (404) 294-0514, mwsnowflake@juno.com; **92nd Armd FA Bn (Korea)**, Chattanooga, TN, 10/27-29, Guy McMenemy, (281) 469-2819, bravecannons@sbcglobal.net; **97th Sig Bn**, Sacramento, CA, 5/5-9, Meir Horvitz, (707) 207-3273, mihorvitz@comcast.net; **317th Maint Co (LEM)**, Washington, 10/16-20, Jack McCabe, (847) 778-3473, jmccabe51@gmail.com; **575th Trans**



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JOINT

Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation Commemoration, Arlington, VA, 12/14-17, John Bowen, (301) 384-6533, johndbowen@earthlink.net; **Vets of the Korean War**, Virginia Beach, VA, 10/8-10, Floyd Newkirk, (757) 340-9801, fnewkirk1@cox.net

MARINES

8th & 1st Mar Kennedy Funeral Detail, Allen, TX, 11/22-23, Ed McCloskey, (828) 787-1660, ed.mccloskey6@yahoo.com; **HMM 261 (1950-2013)**, Quantico, VA, 4/30-5/4, Bill Wells, (559) 291-4505, wewii@bellsouth.net; **India Co 3/7, 1st Mar Div "Band of Brothers,"** Washington, 11/8-12, Roger Villarreal, (832) 573-7382, marine.1@att.net

NAVY

Belknap DLG 26, Tampa, FL, 10/23-27, James McGuiness, (561) 734-7872, flatraveljimmac@aol.com; **Caperton DD 650**, Kansas City, MO, 10/13-15, John English, (816) 739-5906, johnnoe@att.net; **Dahlgren DLG 12/DDG 43**, Savannah, GA, 4/30-5/4, Tommy James, (912) 200-3398, tomalynn@hotmail.com; **Gurnard SSN 662/254**, Groton, CT, 5/1-3, Phil Green, (608) 269-1464, philgreen662@gmail.com; **MCB 133**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/17-19, Dennis Roucou, (910) 842-1341, gulfport67@gmail.com; **NMCCB 62 & Edzell, Scotland, Seabees**, Hampton, VA, 2/20-23, Norm Hahn, (715) 379-8482, normhahnjr@yahoo.com; **Pawcatuck AO 108**, Branson, MO, 5/4-7, Jim Fortune, (410) 329-8154, jimfortune43@gmail.com; **Pocono AGC/LCC 16**, North Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/13-17, Jack Myers, (765) 453-9531, jmyers1064@aol.com; **Saratoga CV 3 & CV/CA 60**, Jacksonville, FL, 10/3-6, Adrien Aube, (508) 209-0346, aaube@comcast.net; **Thompson DMS 38/627**, Fredericksburg, TX, 10/7-11, Andy Bergeson, (281) 813-4422, abergeson7@gmail.com; **Tulane AKA 112**, San Antonio, 2/27-3/1, followed by Jamaican cruise 3/2-9, Sam Schrock, (308) 991-1112, samsldodge@frontier.com; **VA-75**, Frankenmuth, MI, 5/17, Scott Hardy, schardy@charter.net

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IN SEARCH OF

2nd Armd Div 48th Med (Fort Hood, TX, 1959-1961), Gerald Leegwater, (952) 890-2645, theleegs@mcchi.com
7th Sig Bn SHAPE (Paris, 1951-1967), David Brubaker, (570) 265-9647, davidwbrubaker@gmail.com
22nd Car Co SHAPE (Paris, 1951-1967), David Brubaker, (570) 265-9647, davidwbrubaker@gmail.com
87th D Btry AAA 97 Grp Baseball Teams (Okinawa, 1952-1953), "Brud" Coombs, (845) 264-5067
97th Eng Const Bn (France, Germany & Fort Riley, KS, 1951-1971), Larry Castleman, (334) 677-5179, llchief@aol.com
340th Eng Const Bn C Co (ASCOM City, South Korea, U.S. Army Occupation of Japan, 1947), Jim Vincent, (270) 314-1417, vincation@yahoo.com

520th MP Co SHAPE (Paris, 1951-1967), David Brubaker, (570) 265-9647, davidwbrubaker@gmail.com

1002 S&S (Vietnam, 1968-1969), William Bucur, wbucur@neo.rr.com

A Btry 7th Bn (Hawk) 5th Arty (Camp Kaiser, Korea, Aug 1966-July 1968), Al Wheeler, (616) 225-0072, alpamwheeler@gmail.com

A Co 1st Inf Div 1st Avn Bn (1965-1966), Don Gage, (706) 482-0008, don@dgage.us

All SHAPE Enlisted & Commissioned (1951-1967), David Brubaker, (570) 265-9647, davidwbrubaker@gmail.com

Atsugi, Japan, Baseball & Basketball Players (1956-1959), Bob Hipsher, (864) 366-0822, rhipsher@wctel.net

British Army Royal MP With 520th MP Co & Gendarmerie Nationale (1951-1967), David Brubaker, (570) 265-9647, davidwbrubaker@gmail.com

C Btry 5th Bn 4th Arty 1st Inf Bde (Mech) Northern I Corps (Vietnam, 1968-1969), Franklin Townsend, (702) 742-2919, ft67606@gmail.com

Cassia County LST 527 (Jan 1955-Dec 1956), W.B. "Buddy" Hodges, (830) 644-2345

CG Personnel (Toledo, OH, 1966-1970), Lou Tasha, (419) 345-7767, louto45@aol.com

Co 112 (NTC San Diego, Feb 1952), Frank Huffman, (757) 784-0913

Co 427 (Sampson NTC, NY, July 1952), John Simon, (781) 935-7487, johnsimon05@verizon.net

Co 464 (NTC Great Lakes, IL, June 1951), Victor Rick, (715) 537-6696

Delta Co 2nd Bn 1st Tng Bde (Fort Jackson, SC, Jan 1967), Harry Ethridge, (803) 271-2463, harryandsheryl@comcast.net

Exec Flt Det (Fort Belvoir, VA, 1974-1976), Richard Olson, (928) 251-0949, walkaround@earthlink.net

Field Arty Officer Basic Course (FAOBC) 6-68 (Fort Sill, OK, Sept-Dec 1968), Willis Johnson, (580) 885-7251, flyingj12@att.net

G2 Ops 7th Army HQ (Patch Bks, Vaihingen, Germany, 1958-1962), Jim Williams, (610) 767-4269

Installation Defense Cmd (Nha Trang, Vietnam, 1968-1969), Harry Ethridge, (803) 271-2463, harryandsheryl@comcast.net

LSMR 401 (Apr 1954-Jan 1955), W.B. "Buddy" Hodges, (830) 644-2345

Med Co 164th Rgt (ND Nat'l Guard) 47th Div (Camp Rucker, AL, 1952), John Symmes, (910) 791-1734

Mississinewa AO 144 (1968-1970), Arthur Wood, woody31682002@yahoo.com

Observation Island EAG 154 (Cape Canaveral, FL, 1963-1965), Roger Lynn, (863) 425-1234, rlynn@tampabayrr.com

USAF Air Police Assigned With 520th MP Co (1951-1967), David Brubaker, (570) 265-9647, davidwbrubaker@gmail.com

Yosemite AD 19 (1988-1990), Sandra Rushing, (660) 631-0151, rushingsj@yahoo.com

TAPS

Charles W. Barrett, Dept. of Georgia. Dept. Cmdr. 2003-2004, Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 2004-2005, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2006-2012, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Memb. 2001-2004 and Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1999-2001.

Raymond J. Brodzinski, Dept. of Missouri. Dept. Cmdr. 1997-1998, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Chmn. 2002-2003, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1986-1996, 1999-2000 and 2003-2013, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2000-2001 and Nat'l Public Relations Cmsn. Memb. 1978-1981.

Harvey E. Daggett, Dept. of Connecticut. Dept. Cmdr. 2008-2009 and Nat'l Law and Order Cmte. Memb. 2005-2013.

John H. Damman, Dept. of Wisconsin. Dept. Cmdr. 1972-1973, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1973-1976, Nat'l Cmdr.'s Aide 1983-1984, Nat'l Homeland Sec. and Civil Preparedness

Cmte. Memb. 1991-1993 and 1995-1997, Nat'l Homeland Sec. and Civil Preparedness Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1993-1995, Nat'l Counter-Subversive Activ. Cmte. Consultant 1988-1991, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1974-1976, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Chmn. 1999-2000, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1973-1974, 1976-1981 and 1984-1985, and Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn 1981-1983.

John J. Dooley, Dept. of Wisconsin. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1984-1985.

Donald E. Loomiller, Dept. of Colorado. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1975-1978, 1980-1981, 1999-2001, 2003-2004 and 2005-2006, and Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1987-1988.

Ronald D. Martin, Dept. of Indiana. Dept. Cmdr. 2005-2006, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1990-2009, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1987-1990 and Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Memb. 2009-2013.

Robert J. Proctor, Dept. of Florida. Dept. Cmdr. 1987-1988, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1990-1999, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1986-1987, Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2000-2002 and 2003-2005, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1988-1990, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1999-2013, Nat'l Citizens Flag Advisory Cmte. Memb. 2005-2013, Nat'l Finance Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Chmn. 2005-2006, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2002-2003, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Chmn. 2006-2013, Nat'l Resolutions Subcmte. Memb. 2003-2006 and 2009-2013, and Nat'l Resolutions Subcmte. Vice Chmn. 2006-2009.

Albert M. Robotti, Dept. of New Jersey. Dept. Cmdr. 1972-1973, Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 1996-1997, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1985-1989, Nat'l Employment Cmte. Memb. 1997-2001, Nat'l Employment Cmte. Chmn. 2001 to 2013, Nat'l Executive Cmte. Memb. 1989-1995, Nat'l Citizens Flag Alliance Cmte. Memb. 1994-1995, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1975-1989 and 1995-1996, Nat'l American Legion Magazine Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1989-1992, Nat'l Public Relations Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Chmn. 1992 to 1995, Nat'l Resolutions Subcmte. Memb. 1992-1993 and Nat'l Subcmte. on Cmtes. Memb. 1993-1995.

William N. Shipley, Dept. of New Jersey. Dept. Cmdr. 1989-1990, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1986-1987 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1995-2007.

Henry J. Stone, Dept. of Florida. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2000-2013.

John E. Titus, Dept. of Pennsylvania. Dept. Cmdr. 1975-1976, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1969-1971, 1973-1974, 1978-1982 and 1984-1988, Nat'l Constitution & By-Laws Cmte. Memb. 1988-1996 and 1999-2012, Nat'l Constitution & By-Laws Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1996-1999 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2012.

Wallace C.S. Young, Dept. of Hawaii. Dept. Cmdr. 1956-1957, Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 1971-1972, Nat'l Americanism Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1962-1965, Nat'l Child Welfare Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Chmn. 1965-1966, Nat'l Child Welfare Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1966-1968, Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1972-1973 and 1974-1975, Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Ex-Officio Memb. 1973-1974, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Memb. 1956-1957, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1979-1986, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1957-1971 and 1972-1975, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1973-1974, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1968-1970, Nat'l Publications Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1957-1958, Nat'l Rehab. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1958-1962, Nat'l Resolutions Assignment Cmte. Memb. 1975-1978, and Nat'l Security Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1970-1971.

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I'm not bald. My hair is hibernating.

A MAN sued his wife for assault. "She hit me with an oak leaf!" he exclaimed to the judge. "Surely that didn't hurt you," the judge scoffed. "It was from our dining room table!"

A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER told his rowdy class, "At your age I could name all the U.S. presidents, in order."

"Yeah," one student replied, "but there were only like three or four of them then, right?"

A STORE EMPLOYEE quit his job and joined the police department. Several months later, a friend asked him how he liked his new line of work.

"Well, the pay and the hours are good," he replied. "What I like best is that the customer is always wrong."

A BOY arrived home with two black eyes.

"Fighting again?" his mother asked. "Didn't I tell you that when you're angry you should count to 100 before you do anything?"

"I did," the boy protested. "But the other boy's mother told him to count to 50."

A TRAVELER checked in to a run-down motel and asked the manager the cost of a night's stay.

"Thirty dollars a night," the manager replied. "Ten dollars if you make your own bed."

"I can do that," the traveler said.

"Whatever you want. I'll be right back with some nails and wood."



"The nicotine patch controls the cravings, but he still needs to do something with his hands."



"Someday, this will all be yours for about 90 days before you undoubtedly run it into the ground."

IN MY YOUTH, we didn't have water. We had to smash our own hydrogen and oxygen atoms.

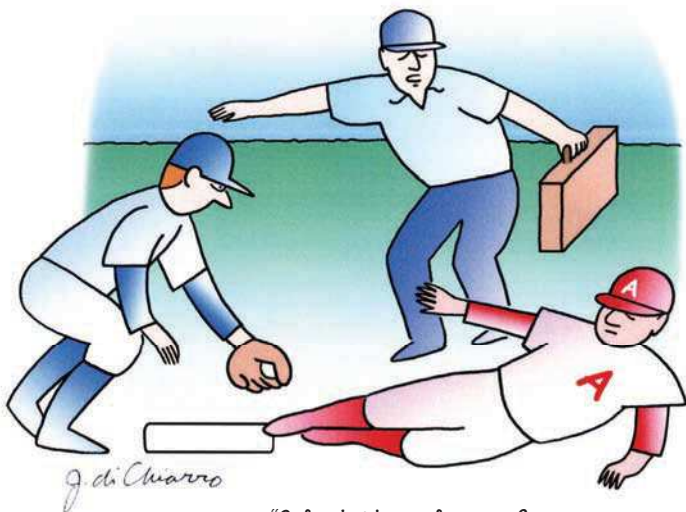
AN OLD MAN went to the doctor and said, "My libido is too high. I want it lowered."

"You're 83 and you want your libido lowered?" the doctor asked incredulously.

"That's right," the old man said, pointing to his head. "It's all up here. I want it lowered."

THE PAPERLESS OFFICE will become a reality at about the same time as the paperless toilet.

"DETROIT HAS BECOME the largest city in U.S. history to file for bankruptcy. What happened was, Detroit's population dropped something like 70 percent, but the government got bigger. The tax base got smaller, but the government got bigger. Thank God that kind of thing could never happen in Washington." – Jay Leno



"Safe – but how safe are you? Have you thought about life insurance?"



DEFECTIVE HIP REPLACEMENT

We have learned that from studies past, present and ongoing that certain hip replacements made by the following companies and the following identified types have been recalled or are subject to pending national litigation. The hip replacement devices of concern are the following:

DEPUY ORTHOPAEDICS, INC

- ASR™ Acetabular System
- ASR™ Hip Resurfacing System
- Pinnacle® (Metal on Metal only)

ZIMMER, INC

- Durom® Acetabular Cup

BIOMET

- M2A Magnum

WRIGHT, INC.

- Conserve Cup Total Hip

STRYKER

- Rejuvenate and ABG II

If you or a family member have had one or both hips replaced since **2002**, and do not know the name of the manufacturer of your hip prosthesis or replacement device, but are having problems from pain, mobility or other concerns, then you may be entitled to compensation for the defective hip replacement device. The Branch Law Firm, a nationally known law firm, is handling these type cases and specifically representing clients on a national basis regarding the following hip devices: **Depuy ASR, Depuy Pinnacle, Zimmer Durom, Wright, Biomet M2A Magnum and Stryker Rejuvenate and ABG II**. Call for a confidential interview, **1-800-828-4529** or **1-800-243-3545** and visit our website at **www.branchlawfirm.com**.

Turner W. Branch, a principal and senior partner of the Branch Law Firm, retired as a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1968. He served on active duty in Camp Pendleton, California and at the Marine Corps Air Facility (MCAF) in Santa Ana, California. While at Camp Pendleton he served with the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (FMF) USMC.

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